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Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly



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AMMAN, 14 - 20 MARCH, 1996, VOLUME 6, NUMBER 45, 350 fils

أسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Sharm el-Sheikh declaration

Leaders condemn terrorism, promise to cooperate in security matters

King vindicates Islam, Clinton vows to support peacemakers, Arafat lashes out at Israel's collective punishment, Peres attacks Iran as center for terrorists

By a Star Staff Writer
SHARM EL SHEIKH—World leaders renewed Wednesday their support for the ailing Middle East peace process and vowed to unite their efforts to combat terrorism while assuring the two main peace partners, Israel and the Palestine National Authority, of their continued backing. But the final statement failed to condemn Iran or deal with the causes of militant activities in the region.

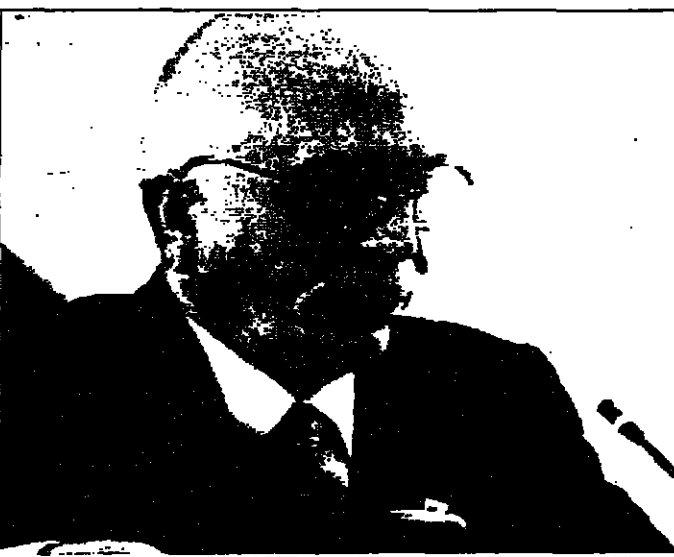
In an unprecedented gathering, leaders and representatives from 29 countries met in this remote Red Sea resort in Egypt's Sinai peninsula for one day to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism in the wake of a series of recent suicide bombings in Israel, blamed on Hamas and Islamic Jihad movement, and which have halted the Middle East peace process.

Hosted by US President Bill Clinton and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the Summit of Peacemakers was attended by His Majesty King Hussein, PNA President Yasser Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Morocco's King Hassan II, Russia's Boris Yeltsin, Britain's John Major, Germany's Helmut Kohl, in addition to officials from Spain, Norway, the Gulf states, Japan and others.

In their final statement, issued jointly by Clinton and Mubarak, the participants expressed their total support for the Middle East peace process and the search for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region. The statement said the summit had three objectives: consolidating peace, strengthening security and combating terrorism. It added that the participants denounced all forms of terrorism especially the latest spate of attacks in Israel. It called upon other governments to join in the denunciation. To achieve their goals, the participants decided to renew their support for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and to back the resumption of the negotiations while paying attention to Palestinian economic needs. The participating countries agreed



Leaders meet in Sinai; King Hussein addresses the gathering



to work together to stop terrorist activities in the region and make sure that perpetrators are brought to justice. It called upon countries to exert efforts to prevent terrorists from using their lands for terrorist activities and to prevent organizations from recruiting new members or raising funds. The participants agreed to form a work group to prepare recommendations on the best ways to achieve these goals and to present these ideas within 30 days.

In his short statement at the

opening session, King Hussein, who accompanied President Clinton on board Air Force One, the presidential aircraft, from Washington, stressed the need to differentiate between the phenomenon of terrorism and Islam as a religion which is based on tolerance. He said terrorism is not restricted to one country, religion or culture and therefore requires confrontation at international levels. The King further said that in the Middle East there seems to be confusion regarding the definition of

martyrdom and suicide and that these definitions need to be clarified. He said that terrorism becomes a crime when there is frustration, poverty and despair. He pointed out that in recent years the countries of the Middle East spent about \$200 billion on armament while spending only \$50 billion on food. He reiterated Jordan's commitment to safeguarding the cause of peace in the region and in resisting all forms of bigotry and regression. He said the peoples of the region yearn for a total and comprehensive peace in addition to security.

President Clinton said the countries of the world had gathered here to send one simple and unified message: that peace will prevail. He called upon participants to cooperate to combat terrorism and cut sources of funding to militant groups. Mr Arafat promised to continue his crackdown against Hamas and Islamic Jihad, but condemned Israel's collective punishment policy which he said weakened the Palestine National Authority and increased pressure on the Palestinian people and their economy. He called for the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli accords and for the setting up of a committee to coordinate the peace process. He also used the forum to remind pledging countries that without additional support the PNA will not be able to deliver the fruits of peace to its people.

For his part Prime Minister Shimon Peres attacked Muslim fundamentalism and accused Iran of being the center for terrorism. He said Tehran was the capital of world terrorism and urged countries to contain the Iranian government. But in the final statement,

the participants avoided pointing the finger at any country that is thought to be associated with terrorism.

Other countries like Japan, called for providing assistance to the PNA in order for it to assume its responsibilities. Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdel Karim Al Aryani pointed to all forms of terrorism and attacked Israel's collective punishment of Palestinians. Qatar's minister of interior annoyed his Gulf colleagues by announcing that he was inviting Mr Peres to visit his country. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal repeated his country's backing of the peace process but suggested that a second Madrid conference was needed to put

Continued on page 2

Islamists attack summit, criticize Jordan's role

By Hamdan Al Hajj
Special to The Star
THE ISLAMIC bloc at the Lower House of Parliament has voiced its opposition to the holding of the "Summit of Peacemakers" at Sharm el Sheikh, and called upon the government to boycott the event. Members of the bloc pointed out that the cause of terrorism in the region is the same party which now talks about combating terrorism, namely Israel.

This position statement by the Islamist bloc came at a time when Jordanian officials were busy this week stressing the significance of the summit

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Les droits de l'Homme malmenés

A LIRE p. 12 dans LE JORDAIN

Summit brings Israel out of the cold, highlights divisions in Muslim world

By Marjorie Miller

LA Times-Washington Post News Service
SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt—Few observers believe that Wednesday's world summit to rescue the Middle East peace accords from the grip of death and to fight terrorism will translate into full cooperation on the ground between Israel and Arab countries.

But the Middle East is a region where political theater plays well, and this gathering will have high drama and a backdrop of important political symbols that could allow it to renew the momentum of peacemaking between Israel and the Palestinians.

Egypt became the first Arab country to make peace with Israel 17 years ago, when Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula where the summit will take place. And Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, two stars of the summit, both replaced leaders who were murdered for trying to make peace, and they live under the specter of the same fate.

Presidents Clinton and Mubarak believe they can turn these symbols into something more substantive.

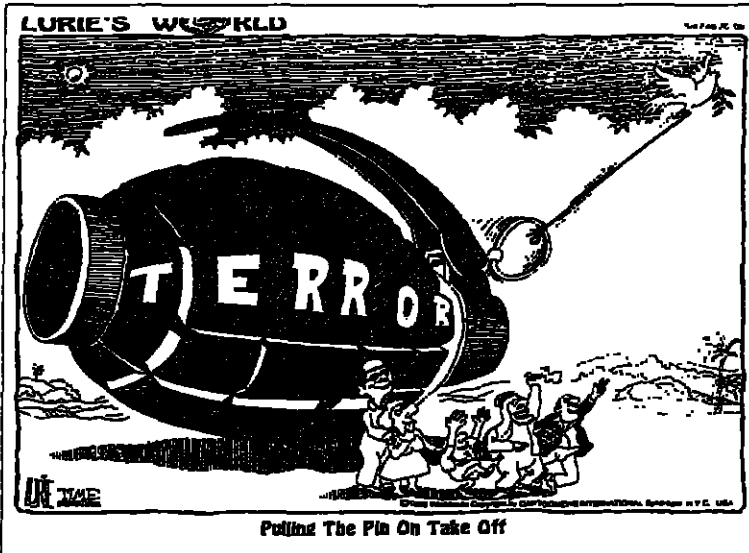
First, they hope the summit will serve to further isolate Iran, which the US government says supports groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which are fighting to eliminate Israel and establish an Islamic state in Palestine—all of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Israel.

The summit hosts hope the world leaders to issue a joint statement in support of peace and

against terrorism, and to establish an international body through which governments, police and intelligence services could cooperate in the battle against terrorism. And they want a charter obliging participating countries to prosecute terrorists.

The "Summit of the Peacemakers" also is likely to further the integration of Israel into the Middle East.

Wednesday, among the 29 participants will be at least 10 Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and others that have been reluctant to appear publicly with Israel.



"Israel was excluded from the Gulf War coalition, but today we are part of the coalition against terrorism," said Israeli Minister Yossi Beilin, one of the architects of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords.

For many, this is wishful thinking. While most commentators support the idea of an international peace conference, few are as optimistic as Beilin that the summit will bring cooperation between Israeli and Arab security services.

The summit has underscored stubborn divisions in the Muslim world as countries are

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Kabariti's economic program:

Realistic targets or wishful thinking?

By Mohammad Adawiya

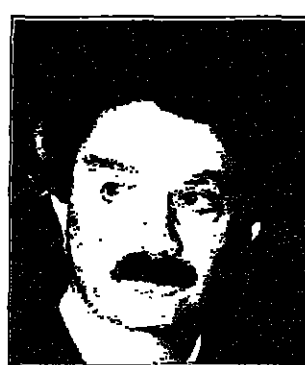
Special to The Star

JUST OVER a month after taking office, Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti hit the ground running, setting off on an ambitious series of economic reforms aimed at revitalizing the Jordanian economy. With many having seen these policies put forth in the past, with mixed results, some are beginning to ask whether the new "Kabariti era," simply consists of more of the same unrealistic targets outlined under previous administrations.

As outlined in his 28 February address to the Parliament, the nine-point initiative, ranging from privatization to poverty, is part of the prime minister's package of economic stimulus initiatives aimed at breathing life into a seemingly lifeless Jordanian economy.

"The Government will continue to apply the economic reform program... which aims at ensuring continued growth of the gross domestic product," the prime minister told Parliament. He also expressed hope that the measures would reduce the government and current account deficits to 2.5 and 2.8 percent respectively by 1998.

Especially high on the new government's list of priorities is the subject of investment. Specifically, the Government hopes to focus on legislation to encourage and facilitate activities in this field. "The public sector will direct its attention to laying the grounds and creating the right environment for investments..." Mr Kab-



Rifai

riti noted. Through such a focus, the Government hopes that success in attracting investment will ultimately lead to prosperity in other areas such as unemployment, monetary stabilization, and foreign debt.

An integral player in attracting investment is the newly formed Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC). Set up in accordance with Law 16 of 1995, the IPC has the notable task of overseeing the nation's investment portfolio. As its director general, Dr Taleb Rifai explained, the IPC is the "implementation arm that executes [investment] policies to make sure the [government's] goals are achieved."

Reporting directly to the Higher Council for Investment—a 13 member committee made up of ministers and headed by the prime minister—the IPC has outlined three main objectives for itself in the current year. These include the inheritance of duties, formerly at the Ministry of Industry and Trade as well as the

Customs and Tax Dept., such as the granting of tax and customs breaks; the overseeing of agencies such as the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in an effort to avoid investors getting the "run-around"; and finally, the responsibility of promoting Jordan's investment both domestically and internationally.

Responding to concerns that Mr Kabariti's nine-point measures are too ambitious, Mr Rifai explains that the question is not whether these policies are ambitious but whether they are needed. "I believe we cannot do without these reforms," Rifai notes. Expressing optimism about the current government's resolve, Mr Rifai notes that the administration, "has a clear and political will to do it..."

While he admits there are major challenges to be overcome, specifically in rallying the support of the public sector, Rifai does not question the government's determination. "Yes, we're serious, and it can be done," he confidently states.

Others view the measures set forth as targets rather than programs. "These are ideals," states Dr Fahed al Fanek, a local Jordanian economist. "To increase production, want growth... I think it's a common policy of all governments," he explains. For Dr Fanek, the question is how to attain these targets.

Yet others still, believe the measures are not ambitious enough. "What's needed are ambitious programs," Mr Riad

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Experts sceptical about outcome of summit

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer

COMBATING TERRORISM and supporting the peace process was the main outcome of the "Summit of the Peacemakers" which was attended by about 30 countries in Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt on Wednesday. No doubt that the latest suicide bombings, carried out by Hamas against Israel, have brought the region to its heels. Some believe that the summit, which was instigated by latest developments, was an old objective for America and Israel.

"It seems that the main goal behind the conference is not really to combat terrorism, in as much as to give legitimacy to the imminent and visible military role of Israel in the region," said Dr Labib Kamhawi, a political analyst, and the vice president of the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Jordan. "The summit marks the beginning of the transformation of the Middle East order into institutions that will replace pan-Arab institutions."

Kamhawi added that "Arabs have two basic pillars which make them Arabs, pan-Arabism and Islam. Pan-Arabism is being systematically destroyed... So, for the West, the new enemy that is replacing communism is Islam."

Some analysts believe Arabs must be more realistic about protecting the peace process. "I believe that Arabs must confirm that the issue is not about bombing and killing by Islamic militants, but about violence from the Israelis which must be taken into consideration," said Hani Hourani, the director of

Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center. "I believe that the siege against the Palestinian people that is presently enforced and which creates immense physiological and financial pressure, is very unhealthy to the peace process."

Hourani said that the summit is nothing more than a means of surrendering to the "Israeli vision under American blessings." He argues that "Israel and Hamas are responsible for the decline of the peace process."

While the summit condemned terrorism, it failed to define terrorism or look for its causes—a controversial issue between the Arabs and Israel.

"The conference was not ready to debate two essential points," Dr Jawad Al Anani, a former minister said. "First, a clear definition of terrorism, and how we can distinguish terrorism from a nation's rights to struggle for its legitimate rights." He added that "They didn't look at the reasons and the roots behind violence, of discrimination, occupation and social injustice."

Most agreed that suicide bombings are not part of the cultural heritage of Arabs and Islam.

"...but nobody wants to address the real issue, which is why would a 20 year-old young Palestinian at the beginning of his life decide to kill himself and as many people as possible in the process?" Kamhawi asked. "It is not only the fact that Hamas is behind this or that. It takes more than this to convince a man to kill himself."

For peace opponents, armed struggle against Israel is legitimate according to international conventions as long as

there is occupation and repression. The opposition and moderates believe that the peace treaties between Arab countries and Israel have not redeemed all occupied Arab lands.

"Of course Hamas is to be blamed as it admitted responsibility," Anani said. "But when you talk about the general atmosphere and the environment of violence, we should not pin the blame on any single party but on the general circumstances which are impeding the peace process."

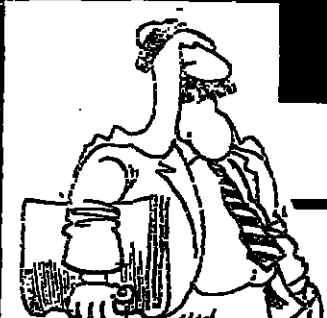
Dr Anani drew an analogy between the latest Hamas bombings and the assassination of Israeli prime minister Rabin, when the assassin admitted the guilt and was taken to court. "nobody was rushing to convict him. The Labor party also accused peace opponent by creating the atmosphere for the assassination."

Some believe that the bombings have negatively affected the Palestinian situation and threatened the final stage of negotiations in that respect, but they also believe that violent Israeli policies against Palestinians were the main reason behind such reactions, pointing to the killing of Hamas' mastermind of operations Yahya Ayash and Islamic Jihad leader, Fathi Shqaqi.

"There should be a more balanced vision. Israel must adhere to a policy that bans military campaigns against Hamas. There should not be a political agenda in the one hand and an intelligence and security agenda on the other," Hourani said.

"We have to understand what terrorism means. It is clear that any action

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JORDAN

W E E K

An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Awni Abu Ghosh

Regent says terrorism contradicts the values of Islam

AMMAN (Star)—Jordan and Israel stressed the importance of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit held on Wednesday, in uniting moderate voices against violence. HRH Crown Prince Hassan the Regent, the Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, and Prime Minister Kabirli held a press conference on Tuesday, during Mr Barak's brief visit to Jordan.

Prince Hassan stressed the fact that such violent acts are in contradiction with Islam as "a humane system of values." He added that Jihad is being misused by those for whom it is politically expedient to use violence. He said that "there are many moderate Moslem voices who condemn the accusation that there is anything related to Islam in the pictures of blood and violence in Ashkelon, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem."

On being asked about the existence of Hamas offices in Jordan, the Prince stressed that political offices of all kinds exist all over the world, and that Hamas itself has offices in London. "The peace treaty is committed to current and basic security, which we strive to protect, but it should not be seen as license within the rule of law to invade the rights of citizens." He stressed that Jordan and Israel should realize that they are both equally committed to peace. "It is not the world that is calling us to order, but we who wish to see security and the rule of law prevail in our region," he added.

Barak said he was fully satisfied with Jordan's security measures and the answers he received regarding Jordan's handling of the issue. He hoped that the summit in Egypt will ensure future cooperation with a wider circle of countries in the region, leading to a sharing of intelligence and technology to suppress terrorism in the area. "We should fight terrorism like our forefathers fought piracy on the high seas," he added, and pointed out that through a global effort, piracy was eradicated in less than half a generation.

DUP out of the anti-normalization scene

The Popular Committee for the Protection of the Homeland and Resistance to Normalization seems to be facing a split. In its recent meeting, a row started over the appointment of two of its members, Dr Mustapha Shneikat and Dr Kamal Nasser as ministers in the Kabirli Government. In what is perceived as an ultimatum to Dr Shneikat's Democratic Unity Party (DUP), the committee asked the party to either expel the minister or withdraw him from the cabinet. Being what they are, the DUP stood by their man and walked out of the meeting.

The DUP argues that though it is a member of the committee, it has the right as an independent party, to have different views on the many issues of the committee. The DUP endorsed Shneikat's ministerial designation on the basis of its conviction and approved by its democratic institutions. Hence, the DUP rejects any interference in its internal affairs. Strong words indeed.

DUP's deputy secretary general Mr Fahmi Katkut said

"we are interested to give the Government and the minister (Shneikat) a chance, and then assess their performance in as far as deepening public freedoms, the elections law, dialogue with the political parties, the press, and human rights are concerned." But what is strange is that the DUP was never consulted on Shneikat's appointment. Like many others, he was approached as an individual deputy.

Ministry of Higher Education's future at stake

Higher education, university policies and admissions, and financial allowances at universities are burning issues that have recently been brought into focus by seminars, parliamentary debates, and press reports. These however, didn't do much to help the Ministry of Higher Education. It is going to the chop, or so it seems.

The Lower House is expected to debate the Government's new draft law on higher education. As part of its strategy to revamp education, the Government wants to abolish the said ministry.

Some argue that there is no need for a ministry if the autonomy of state universities is ensured, their financiers guaranteed, and administration is well set up. But even then these universities cannot solve the problem of the dozens of thousands of annual secondary school leavers who seek university education. The raising of university fees as a means of limiting university enrollment only recycles the problem and increases unemployment. Coordination with the ministry of education could help to find a radical solution, but it will be a long therapy course. The education policy and curriculum at this ministry need, still, deeper review and replanning. This can only be properly done through the involvement of all those concerned in the country.

Lawyers election heat

The sudden resignation of Dr Kamal Nasser, former chairman of the Jordanian Lawyers Association to become the Minister of Administrative Development, led to a heated competition between Jordanian lawyers.

The post, now up for grabs has sent many lawyers scurrying.

Though the number of candidates has already reached seven, the association failed to hold a general meeting last Friday because there was no quorum. The meeting will be convened tomorrow Friday, while the elections will take place 19 April.

Lawyers Ziad Khasawneh, a nationalist, and Mr Saleh Al Armozi, supported by the Islamists, will run for the post of president.

Fixing the journalist identity

The Legal Commission of the Lower House has been reviewing the Jordan Press Association's provisional draft law for the last two weeks. Should the Government suggest any amendments to its articles, then the whole law would have to be withdrawn from parliamentary debate.

The Star learned the adjustments to the Provisional Law touch upon the definition of a journalist. He should be a writer, a reporter, or an editor, or anyone who has a university degree in journalism. Workers at news agencies, Radio, or TV, should also be seen as journalists. Training at newspapers is also dropped as a condition for JPA membership. However, standing orders for chief editors remain as they are, otherwise the Press and

Publishing Law would have to be amended. If these amendments are to be approved, the JPA ranks will certainly grow stronger, and its efficiency and influence will also be greater.

Two Egyptian lawyers volunteer to defend Shbeilat

In its session on Sunday, the State Security Court witnessed a sharp verbal exchange between Shbeilat's lawyer and the prosecutor-general. According to *Al Majd* weekly, each reserved the right to follow legal procedures against the other at a later stage.

The dispute between the defending lawyer Jawad Yunis and the prosecutor-general Mahmoud Ubeidat erupted during the questioning of the witness Bassam Baddarin, a correspondent of *Al Quds Al Arabi*, who interviewed Shbeilat in July 1995, but that issue of the newspaper was censored by the Press and Publishing Dept.

In a later session this week, lawyer Ahmed Najdawi, also for the defence announced at the Court the arrival of two Egyptian lawyers to join Shbeilat's defense committee. They are Dr Abdel Halim Mandour and Dr Kamel Mandour. There is an agreement between Jordan and Egypt where lawyers can defend clients in either country.

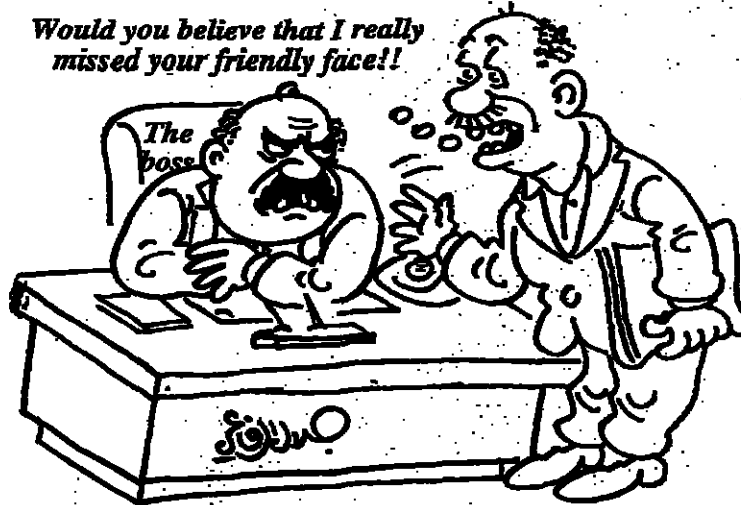
While questioning the witness, Mr Yunis was interrupted by Ubeidat who accused the defender of playing with the witnesses memory and called on the judge to consider the presentation of a photocopy of the interview as satisfactory. Yunis didn't accept that and regarded the prosecutor as fragmenting the defender's evidence.

Objections and counter objections from both sides led to accusations and counter accusations. The session was adjourned. Meanwhile, the Engineers Association called on their members and engineering companies to participate in a two hour sit-in, from 11 am to 1 pm today, Thursday, 14 March, in solidarity with Shbeilat. The sit-in is to be held in the Provisional Association Complex.

Hamad: In for the chop!

Former Interior Minister Salameh Hamad might be taken to court for "a number of administrative abuses," said *Al Bilad* Weekly. It added that Hamad is criticized for giving public bus routes and of distributing state-owned land to certain individuals. *Al Bilad*

Would you believe that I really missed your friendly face!!



Jamal Khalfad Dastour

New elections law viewed

Deputy Toujan Faisal said the elections law presented by the Government maintains two basic and essential defects. They are: the one

Dr Fahd Fanek said the one man one vote system is best as it brings about the most representative system, avoids the possibility of



any group receiving votes incompatible with its real size, and free political platforms from blackmail. Dr Raif Juncidi called for a democratic election law through the scrutinization of the whole legal system, especially the separation between the three authorities. He said a deputy is a representative of the nation, and that the powers of both houses of Parliament should be separated in favor of the Lower House as far as legislation is concerned. Juncidi added that there should be guarantors which insure the deputy's stability, and his function in monitoring and passing laws free from political appeasement.

noted that these accusations have been combined with rumors about the 'expropriation' of state lands by certain public figures and the abuse of public positions illegally. It pointed out that Prime Minister Kabirli's prompt reply to deputy Bassam Umouh's questions in this regard, which expressed the Government's regret for those shortcomings and hoping they wouldn't recur in the future, clearly acknowledges that those violations actually took place.

In fact, the reopening of discussion on such matters in the Lower House, and Umouh's accusation of Hamad as a 'centre of corruption' during his ministerial term, constitute another factor for Hamad's possible being before the court, *Al Bilad* believes. Still more, Kabirli asked Umouh to forward to the Prosecutor General or to the Government any document that supports his statement. This confirms the Kabirli Government's determination to take anybody to the court for mismanagement if relevant documents are provided.

Letter to Sharm el Sheikh summit

The President of the General Union of Palestinian Women Samiha Khalil addressed the Sharm el Sheikh Summit. In a

Parties of the national front discuss unity

It seems that everybody is merging. Well not everybody, for some are as distinct in their political aura and ideology as black and white. Still, the four centrist parties, those of the National Coalition, Progress and Justice, Al Yagtha, and Al Wasan parties are coming together again. Only last week they met to try and turn themselves into one party. Although they are linked in a loose coalition, the Jordanian National Front, their movement towards integration started last year.

But why the delay? They more or less have the same ideology and outlook and believe in the finer things in life. But one thing remains a problem. Most of the leaders of these parties want to be bosses. Most, are, in their respective sphere. Al Rawabdeh of the Al Yagtha, the old man of politics would certainly not see eye to eye with Ali Farid Al Sa'ad, the Progress and Justice chief of Jordanian tobacco.



letter to the delegates, she reminded them of the Israeli actions of mass manslaughter, destruction and imprisonment of Palestinians. The letter said that since the Madrid Conference in October 1991, Israel has killed 400 Palestinians, imprisoned 1,550 people, uprooted 30,292 trees, demolished 232 houses and confiscated 253,084 dunums.

Leaders agree to cooperate in security matters

Continued from page 1 the peace process on track—a proposal originally made by the Syrians who boycotted the summit.

Presidents Clinton and Mubarak avoided any criticism of Syria's President Assad for not attending the summit. President Mubarak said Syria is committed to peace while Mr Clinton told reporters that Syria has its reasons for not attending.

In a joint press conference, Mr Clinton and Mr Mubarak avoided specific question about what concrete actions will be taken to combat terrorism and reassure the Israelis. Mr Clinton said people should look at what was achieved rather than what was not and said he was satisfied at the historic gathering and the commitment to peace that was generated.

While world leaders were meeting in southern Sinai, Hamas and other militant groups renewed their pledge to resume attacks against Israelis in an Islamic conference to confront the terrorism summit which was held in Lebanon on Wednesday.

Islamists attack summit

Continued from page 1 and justifying its convening as a way to provide unequivocal support to the peace process. They underlined that Jordan was not a victim of terrorism. They added that the summit will provide means to support the Palestinians in their attempt to form their own state, while depriving the anti-peace forces of the opportunity of undermining that effort.

While underlining the IAF rejection of all forms of terrorism, spokesman of the IAF Mr Hamzah Mansour pointed out that delegates to the summit should address the continued occupation of Palestine and the evacuation of its people; the continued occupation of Jerusalem and Israel's insistence on regarding it as its eternal capital; demolishing Palestinian houses; land confiscation and settlement construction; collective punishment of Palestinians; the imprisonment of Palestinians including the elderly, women, and children; and the continued occupation of southern Lebanon. "Are these not acts of terrorism?" he asked.

He charged that Israel's terrorism is supported materially and morally while it continues to ignore international resolutions. That leaves no alternative to the people but to resort to legitimate forms of national resistance which is legal under all laws and norms, Mansour said.

Another IAF deputy, Dr Hamam Said, expressed his surprise over Jordan's position in support of Israel and stated that the Jewish entity has not returned the holy places it occupies. He demanded the government to stop its denunciation and to break away from the American grip.

Experts sceptical

Continued from page 1 acts, and Jordan also cannot accept the fact that artificial obstacles are put in the way of peace." He added "We have committed ourselves to the peace process, to regional cooperation, to democracy, to peaceful coexistence in the region. Therefore Jordanian foreign policy should be very adamant on this position."

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CLASSIFIEDS

Big flat in Jabal Lweibdeh to share. 10 minutes from the French Cultural Center. Free at end of March. JD 120 per month. Please call Claudia or Benny. Tel: 611712, evening.

Realistic targets or wishful thinking?

Continued from page 1

al Khouri, director of a local economic consultancy firm states. Mr Khouri believes that the initiatives proposed by the prime minister are extremely realistic given the dire state of the Jordanian economy. "Jordan doesn't have time left for business as usual," Mr Khouri believes that Jordan's economic "troubles" are analogous to a person with a "serious illness: 54 percent of total investment (in Jordan) is under Government control," he explains, "more than Syria which is a traditional example of a socialist style," he adds. These types of discouraging facts, according to al Khouri, require even more ambitious initiatives than those laid out.

Despite the differences of

opinion regarding the level of ambition of the measures, most believe that Mr Kabirli does bring something new to government which his predecessors missed. "The difference is style," Mr Khouri explains. He believes Mr Kabirli brings to the prime ministry a "modern" approach to politics. Specifically, he cites the new prime minister's ability to deal with opposing views and opinions as a welcome attribute. Nevertheless, he warns that this may not be enough to significantly affect the state of the economy. He is hopeful, however, that Mr Kabirli can "tip the scale in the right direction."

For Mr Rifai, the difference is not so much in Mr Kabirli's economic plan, but in the current political environment.

"This Government had to come at the right time," he stated. Giving much credit to previous administrations for leading the nation through a period of "transition," Mr Rifai notes that the major difference in this Government is that the nation has now reached the "implementation stage." For this reason, Mr Rifai has high hopes for the success of the programs.

Dr al Fanek, while also lauding previous administrations in dealing with the economic crisis of 1989 and working to stabilize the dinar, believes that the Government is, more or less, a continuation of previous Governments. He explains that the economic programs of the country are goals that "all governments strive for," as outlined by International Monetary Fund (IMF) programs. For this reason, al Fanek places less emphasis on the tar-

gets themselves, and more on the approach that will be taken to achieve them.

There is a consensus that the measures outlined by the prime minister are long term goals, with some, such as Dr Fanek explaining that these will continue to be the nation's goals for years to come. Mr Rifai echoes this sentiment, calling it a "slow process" that will result in "no sudden breakthroughs or surprises."

With the November 1997 elections on the horizon, however, and 22 members of the administration up for reelection, including the prime minister, some prefer to measure the success of the programs against a less demanding criterion. "Things are better now...than they were two years ago [and] they will be better at the end of '96 than they are now," Mr Rifai, who places more importance on "putting the mechanism in place" rather than setting timetables for its completion, explains.

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The Jordanian Journalists' delegation who were invited by Cyprus Airways to visit Cyprus. (Top, left to right): Samir Hiyari (Raf), Mr. Cleonides Nafitis (Cyprus Tourism Organization, ME & Gulf), Nabil Ghishan (Aswag), Missa Bajali (Urdu Jaddid), Nader Ajlilat (Ad Dastour) (Sitting, left to right): Rafiq Thoniparakat (Jordan Times), Mahmoud Faris (Star), Awni Madin (Cyprus Airways, Amman).

Summit brings Israel out of the cold, highlights divisions in Muslim world

Continued from page 1

forced to show, through their attendance, whether they support or repudiate the Middle East peace process. Some governments and Islamic militants charge that the conference is a sham to legitimize US and Israeli dominance in the region, condone harsh security measures against Palestinians and undermine what they regard as a legitimate right for Arabs to fight to liberate their occupied territories.

In the words of a commentator in the Lebanese daily *An Nahar*, Wednesday's meeting in the tiny Red Sea resort of Sharm el Sheikh is intended to "abolish the difference between terrorism and resistance." The main criticism being leveled against the conference is that the meeting came only in response to the killing of Israeli citizens; the world's outrage was far less vocal in response to past attacks by Israel's army or to killings committed by Jewish extremists against Arabs.

But other Arab governments, hoping for a Mideast peace that would bring greater stability and prosperity, have responded enthusiastically to the call for the conference. Not coincidentally, some of these regimes are threatened themselves by the rising tide of Islamic extremism.

But because popular opinion in most Arab countries has been slow to reconcile itself to peace with Israel, participation in a high-profile summit called in response to a recent wave of violence against Israelis has been a politically risky option for many Arab governments.

Clinton drew a line in the sand over the summit, putting those who attend on the side of peace and those who do not on the side of what he termed "the merchants of hatred," or terrorists.

Several of the Arab countries that are weighing in for peace may be doing so because they, too, face threats from Islamic extremists rather than because they embrace Israel.

Nonetheless, they are standing on Israel's side of the desert line, while neighboring Syria and Lebanon opted to remain on the other side, in the camp of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and other states that allegedly support terrorism. The United States is brokering peace talks between Israel and Syria, and tried along with Mubarak to get Syrian President Hafez Assad to attend. Assad refused.

Israel's internal politics has colored some criticism of the summit. Opponents of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process dismiss the gathering as a transparent effort to rescue the election bid of Peres in the May 29 national vote, and to prop up the regime of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Leaders of Israel's opposition Likud Party say the summit is political theater rather than a serious effort to combat terrorism.

"It will not save one Jewish soul," said Ariel Sharon, a former defense minister and hard-line Likud member of Parliament.

Undoubtedly, an international event that seems so pro-Israel will help Peres, who is rumored to have conceived the idea of the summit. And it is true that a four-hour meeting will not be much of a shirt-sleeves work session. The participants cannot expect to produce an anti-terrorism network on the spot.

As for Arafat, the summit's goal of forming a charter obliging signatories to prosecute terrorists is aimed at him as much as anyone.

Publicly, US and Israeli officials have been enthusiastic about Arafat's most recent crackdown on Hamas and the militant group Islamic Jihad in Gaza and the West Bank after a rash of suicide bombings in Israel that took more than 60 lives. Some officials suggest that he has finally abandoned his policy of trying to negotiate Hamas' entry into the new Palestinian political system.

Under pressure from Israel and the United States, Arafat has arrested more than 600 militants, including 10 of 13 top Hamas military and political leaders on a list provided by Israel. He has ordered searches of mosques, Islamic colleges and universities, and Hamas social services centers.

But privately some Americans and Israelis are skeptical that Arafat means to persevere to the point of breaking Hamas. They fear that soon he will release the detainees as he has in the past.

Some political analysts insist that a summit with so many Arab leaders lining up against terrorism gives Arafat more leeway to take on Hamas without appearing to be doing Israel's dirty work.

Security analyst Schiff, on the other hand, warns that the summit could take the pressure off Arafat. He says that by sitting the Palestinian leader at the table with heads of states for a conference against terrorism, the international community "grants him legitimacy as a fighter of terror before he actually has done it."



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, receives the Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak at the Royal Court, Tuesday. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabriti. They discussed the current peace process and the importance of security. Later they held a press conference. (See related story on 2).

Muhamed Mrahorovic, the Bosnian Chargé d'affaires Dyton Agreement is not a just solution to Bosnia

The second main factor that helped to trigger the Bosnia issue is the prevailing situation in Europe. In fact, Europe today tries hard to restore its lost position as a cradle of civilization, and its former significance as a great continent in this globe.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Last week, the Embassy of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Amman celebrated their country's Independence Day. On that occasion, professor Muhamed Mrahorovic, the Bosnian Chargé d'affaires at the Embassy spoke to *The Star's* Awai Abu Ghosh. Excerpts follow:

How do you see the situation regarding Bosnia after the Dyton Agreement?

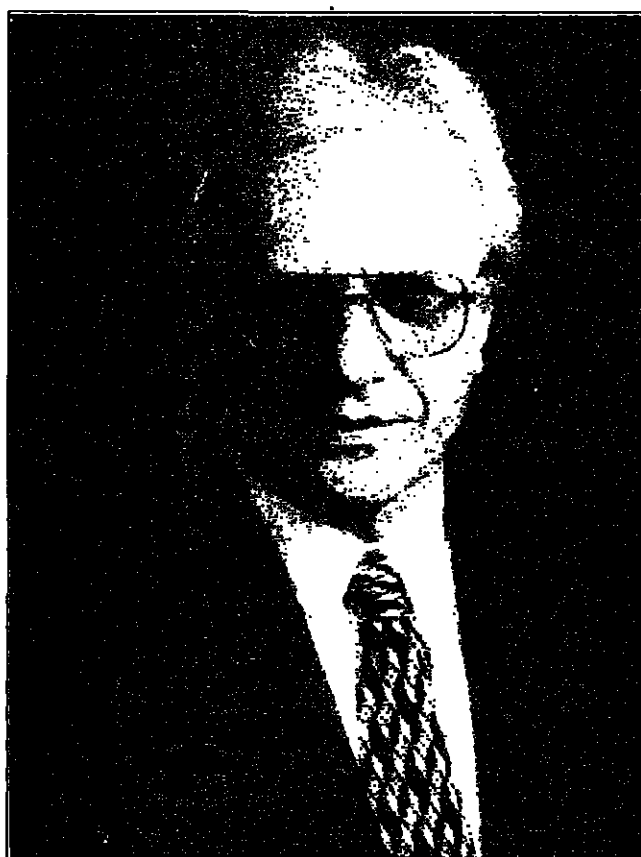
Emphasis is now being laid on the Dyton Accord which was signed by the Bosnian government, and is accepted by the Bosnian people and other nationalities who cherish peace in Bosnia. Other nations—who didn't take part in the aggression against Bosnia, or perpetrated any of the crimes, disposals and extortion against the Bosnian people, or implemented the fascist thoughts that are perpetuated by the Serbian Democratic Party, President Malochovic, and his stooge Karadovic—have also accepted this accord.

In spite of our support for the Dyton Agreement, we do not see it as a just solution to the Bosnia problem, and especially to its majority: the Bosnian (Bosniaci) people. In accordance with internationally and Europe-recognized values, people that is exposed to external aggression has the right to resist and defend itself. Though the world community acknowledged the aggression against Bosnia and pledged—through many UN resolutions—to defend it, nothing of the kind has regrettably happened. We, the Bosnians, turned to the European democracies asking for their help to rebuff foreign aggression, but our request for Bosnia's right to self-determination was turned down.

Do you think the inherited Balkan relations have prolonged Bosnian sufferings? Or have certain European countries any interest in not realizing a just solution to the Bosnian problem?

The triggering of the Bosnian crisis has its old roots. The comprehension of these factors will certainly help to understand the ongoing conflict, and to finally solve it. The old Serbian Kingdom has traditional aspirations in Bosnia. Many wars were launched in the past to achieve that end, the most important and decisive of which was in 1389. The Serbs were defeated by the Ottomans and Boshnaqs. So their role and prestige diminished in the region, especially in terms of their relations with the Croats and Bosnians. Meanwhile, the strength and influence of Bosnia increased in the coming years at the expense of the vanquished Serbia. In the 15th century, Bosnia adopted Islam even sometime before the Ottomans conquered the Balkans.

It should also be mentioned that rivalry among the Slovene nations in that region persisted ever since the Crusades. Though the Bosnian people was not Christian (Catholic or Orthodox) before embracing Islam, it was subjected to five



Mrahorovic

crusade invasions. The Bosnian people's original religion before Islam was the main reason for their conquest. The Bosnians then were regarded as apostates from the prevailing Christianity in the region. Hence, they should be fought, and be forcibly converted to Christianity.

Therefore, religion can be thought of as an essential factor in determining relations and launching wars among the European Kingdoms at the time. This proved true especially after the Ottomans retreated from the Balkans.

Several wars were launched against the Boshnaqi people to eliminate and expel them from Europe and the Balkan. The Boshnaqs have now become representatives of the oriental religion and civilization. It was the Serbs who took up the task against the Boshnaqs, especially as the chauvinist ideas started to penetrate the Serbian church. This is not to mean that we accuse the Serbian church of its inhuman actions.

The present Serbian attempt at Bosnia is the eleventh of its kind. Unfortunately, it is taking place now at the turn of the 21 century.

The second main factor that helped to trigger the Bosnia issue is the prevailing situation in Europe. In fact, Europe today tries hard to restore its lost position as a cradle of civilization, and its former significance as a great continent in this globe.

Do you believe that Europe's attempts to regain its international position proceed from these considerations?

Yes, experience shows that Europe's traditional drives have come up once every half a century. Though wars were the main manifestation, it was only the form of the wars that has changed. For instance, under Tito, these drives were gal-

vanized by the cadres dominating in the economic, scientific, military, security, and other fields of life and government. This was followed by the Serb settlements in Bosnia to enact demographic changes in the country. All the more so as many Bosnians abandoned these areas for others in search for job opportunities. Then came the "agrarian reform" policies under which lands were seized from the Boshnaqs and handed over to the new Serbian settlers. Hence, the Bosnian people became poor, without land and uprooted in their own homeland.

What are the difficulties you are now facing in the reconstruction of Bosnia?

Economic relations among the countries of the region should be developed. However, I believe it is the legitimate right of the Bosnian government to request the neighboring expansionist states to give up their aggressive plans against Bosnia. It is also the right of our government to receive compensations for the destruction and despoliation inflicted upon our people by such states. These compensations will effectively contribute to the reconstruction process. How then can Bosnia establish economic relations with Serbia and Black Mountain if its infrastructures are destroyed and taken centuries back? However, I am sure that many commercial companies and investment projects of the private sector in both countries have already resumed their former relations and economic activities.

Bosnia's economic relations with Croatia were not interrupted at all during the last years. The corporations and institutions of the private and public sector in both countries have developed their relations even further.

We maintain excellent relations with Slovenia, as well as other European countries. In fact, a number of Bosnian private companies continue to economically cooperate with their counterparts in European countries. Geographical location and transport communications among the European countries are yet additional factors which facilitate business. Personally, I don't see any obstacle in the way of resuming economic relations between Bosnia and the other European states provided that they are based on equality and parity.

What are the possibilities, prospects, and criteria for European integration?

This is an important issue. Perhaps, it won't be that long before values of tolerance dominate again in Europe, and malicious feelings against smaller nations and different civilizations and cultures in the continent vanish. Islam has become one of Europe's values. So there is no need to fear it or its peoples. Once Europe acknowledges this fact, it will start regaining its previous role and prestige. It was in Europe that dialogue on rapprochement among cultures and civilization began. Philosophic, social, and religious discussions on the future of the world sprouted in this continent first as of whether the world was moving towards conflict or co-existence of religious and cultures. However, some European countries seem now to have understood these values which will shape the future.

How are Jordan-Bosnia relations standing now?

Our bilateral relations with Jordan are very good. The many signed agreements and joint statements testify to this fact. They all include deep rooted values. Among others, there is the bilateral agreement on educational and cultural cooperation. Very soon an economic agreement on economic cooperation will also be signed.

We especially appreciate the Jordanian people and government's material, moral and political support to Bosnia. These relations are developing continuously, especially as this country's people, government and King have clearly understood the true nature of the Bosnian problem, and have accordingly defined their position. We are very grateful to them all.

What about the Jordan-Bosnia Friendship Society?

The establishment of this society is a reflection of the Jordanian people's position toward the Bosnian people. It has been created by the initiative of Jordanian citizens and intellectuals to support our people and our embassy in Amman. I am afraid I can't find the appropriate words to express my feelings and appreciation for that.

In the near future, the program of the society will enter its second phase, especially in the field of culture. Besides strengthening cooperation among university professors in both countries, the society will also help the translation and publishing of a number of old Bosnian manuscripts of scientific and cultural value.

Point of order

By Raed Al Abed

Who's who in the corruption game

■ We could pin the blame on anybody in our search for reasons for our deteriorating economic situation. But we don't have to search too far. In our fight of corruption, both legally and administratively, we should focus on a handful of opportunists who have abused the country's resources, pilfered public money, and used their influence to satisfy their own needs at the country's expense.

As we enter the peace era, we are faced with a local economy that is still controlled and manipulated by a minority of the population. The rest pay taxes. We talk about corruption in seminars and we mention it in public statements. But what else have we done?

We have stopped short of answering a simple question: How a small country like Jordan ended up with a foreign debt burden of \$7 billion, high rates of poverty and unemployment and a low standard of living? Beyond that what can a 31-member government do to alleviate such problems. Can anybody?

In the age of transparent government, our people still ask about the fate of billions of dollars in donations and financial support which Jordan had received from Arab and other foreign countries in the past decades?

One answer comes from the man in the street with many mouths to feed: "It has gone with the wind."

The other answer, which was shocking, came from Mrs Joan Spero, the American under secretary of state for economic and agricultural affairs, who said that the United States has given a lot of financial support to Jordan, but had stopped as it learned a lesson from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s when billions were flowing out of Jordan into private accounts. Mrs Spero was commenting—during the Amman Economic Summit in October last year—on a question about the decrease and the subsequent end of American financial support for Jordan, compared to that which is given to Israel. During the same event, other donors and participants spoke of corruption.

Even in the democratic era, we still have not reached a stage at which we can see an official in court accused of corruption because fighting such activities is an arduous business.

However, the 70-page government policy program which was presented to the Lower House last week was described as an apology for the past, and the start of a clean-up campaign at all levels.

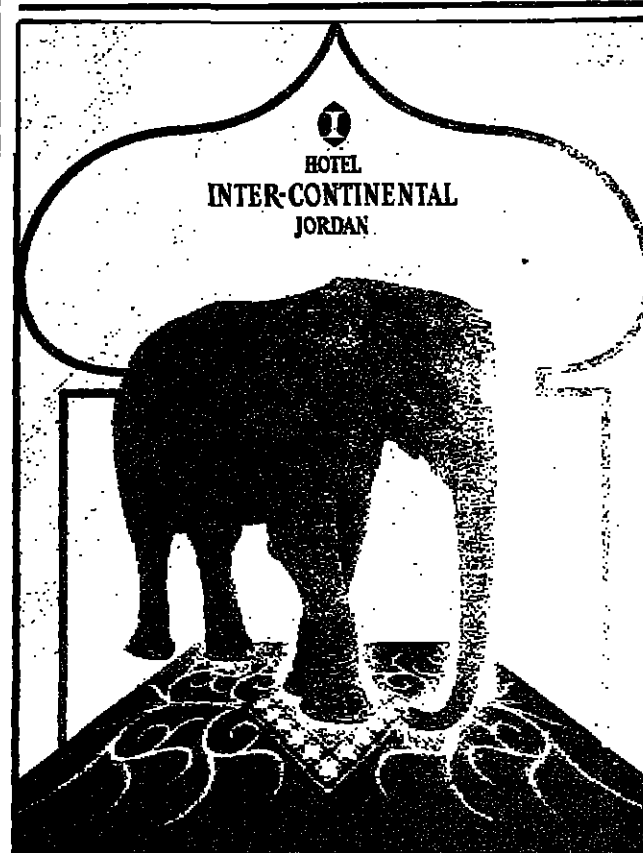
It is true that the Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabriti is seriously working to end some ministerial privileges. It is positive to hear that officials are struggling against bureaucracy, corruption and mismanagement. But it is the right time to dig into the past because our deep economic problems are related to previous financial mismanagement.

Unveiling greed will not damage Jordan's image. On the contrary, it will create trust and deepen cooperation with other countries who seek greater economic ties with us, but who no longer want to hear excuses.

Fingers point to those who must be questioned about their role. But the amazing thing is that those personalities who were involved in such activities are still occupying important positions in official circles.

Jordanians have a right to know and bring those guilty of misusing public funds to justice. Courts exist, the press is alive and strong, files are in the hands of the government, so there's no time to waste. ■

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Business scene

Age of space communications begins

By Bilal Hijawi
Special to the Star

■ The amount of goods that went through the port of Aqaba last February totalled 690,329 tons. Of these, 302,572 tons were imported. About 387,757 tons were exported. The exports included 250,160 tons of phosphate, 83,385 tons of potash, 24,000 tons of fertilizer and 20,222 tons of other goods. The amount of imports and exports going through the port were 1,786,729 tons, 748,630 tons were imported while 1,209,999 were for export. The number of ships that docked at Aqaba last year was 191.

■ Japan is to grant Jordan \$10 billion. This grant is aimed to assist Jordan's balance of payment and encourage the Government's efforts of economic reforms as suggested by the World Bank. Japan's assistance to Jordan from April '94 to March '95 amounted to \$388 million.

■ The CBJ will issue new Certificates of Deposits worth JD 15 million as of 16 March, for 3 and 6 month periods and at an annual interest rate of 9.125% and 9.5% respectively. Current assets of deposits at the CBJ are JD 364.9 million. The CBJ also advised licensed banks in the country of its readiness to re-purchase CDs at an annual interest rate of 10%.

■ Despite the crisis that characterized the different sectors of the economy last year, the United Insurance Co. realized a 70 percent growth in shares while in 1994, the company earned JD 3,309,100 in shares. Its profit amounted to JD 373,735.

■ During the last two months, RJ carried 186,348 passengers (a 13.7% increase over the same period last year). RJ records showed that in January and February, its seat capacity was 61.7% full. Its cargo was 57.8% full. The records indicate that RJ flew 9,768 hours. The largest increase in RJ routes were to the Middle East and North Africa, the Far East, USA, Canada, and North Africa.

■ Jordan's vegetable and fruit exports last month were 22,000 tons at JD 4.5 million. Lebanon took the lead of imports and had 10,953 tons, followed by the UAE (4,650 tons) Bahrain (3,170 tons), Qatar (1,865 tons), and Saudi Arabia (772 tons). Foreign countries received 701 tons.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 13 March

	Buy JD	Sell JD
0.7080	0.7100	
1.0770	1.0824	
0.4768	0.4792	
0.5879	0.5908	
0.1393	0.1400	
0.6696	0.6729	
0.4259	0.4280	
0.0453	0.0455	

BY THE end of this century, more than 80 percent of the world, and about 40 percent of its population, is likely to be without cellular coverage. There will also be many fragmented cellular standards, both analogue and digital, and even when standards are common, there may be limitations on roaming between different areas.

Coming about with the introduction of hand-held, satellite telephones are the first truly global mobile telephone systems. Such evolution will allow individuals to use a hand-held telephone, the size of today's mobiles, to call and receive calls wherever they happen to be on earth, regardless of the tele-standards available around them.

The satellite-telephone system promises to set free voice and data communications and will not be limited to national boundaries.

Via hundreds of low orbiting satellites (at around a 1,000-kilometer altitudes) people will be able to connect to each other from anywhere to anywhere using one contact tele-number. These space telephones will also allow users the freedom to choose between modes of operation.

The telephones will operate in dual modes. A caller can switch between the available cellular services (e.g. GSM,

TDMA, CDMA, AMPS, TACS and other) and the available satellite link. This is made possible through special ground-based gateways that act as switcher and router hubs connecting ground with satellite systems. Such an arrangement has helped the providers of satellite telephones to quell the fear of local suppliers, who now understand that the new service will not be competing with them head-to-head. Local operators will become the licensees for the new service and realize a boost to their overall revenues.

Four major global satellite service providers are racing to make this a global reality by the end of 1998. These include Globalstar, Iridium, ICO and Odyssey who are racing against time to finalize launch programs for their satellite systems.

Building a space infrastructure is as much targeted at the developing world as it is at benefiting business for industrial nations. Plentiful scarcely-inhabited land in the developing world is one of the best host-environments for satellite communication applications.

Worldwide demand for global telephone applications was projected by KMPG, Pete Marwick's research firm at 2.6 million by 2002. The Middle East comprises about 2 percent of this total according to studies.

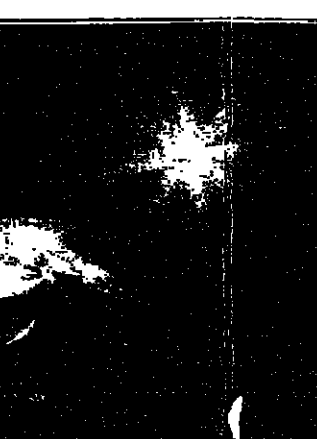
Normal mobile telephone systems and fixed solar-



powered stations, like booths and remote posts will constitute the total market for the satellite service applications. Globalstar executive Mark Newman confirmed that the Middle East is expected to draw no less than 11 percent of the demand for fixed solar-powered telephone-booths.

In the past, projections by marketing experts were gravely off mark for cellular telephone demand. Recent projections expect the market for cellular communications (pagers and voice services) to grow by 370 million by 2000. This healthy climb will enhance demand for satellite-based telephones.

Globe-wide and regardless of terrain and weather conditions, satellite telephone users will be able to stay in touch around the clock, from any-



where to anywhere. Rescue workers, or international businesspersons, journalists, field scientists and other professionals are at the top of the system's customer-list.

The bill for setting up the four projects was estimated at over \$11 billion. Other, less publicized, competing satellite telephone ventures include Ellipso, which will launch 16 low and medium earth orbit satellites (Aries/ECCO with 48 satellites (\$1.7 billion) and AMSC with 10 medium orbit satellites (\$3.1 billion). Most of the latter projects, seem to have a regional rather than a global scope. One of the most ambitious space-based project is Teledec. Still on the drawing-board, Teledec, budgeted at \$9 billion, will inter-connect computers via an 840-satellite constella-

tion in low earth orbits. This system will be dedicated to the global multimedia communication markets.

According to plans, as early as 1999, two of these telephone companies—Globalstar and Iridium—will begin selling their services. Both leading companies had preliminary calculated rates for the service between US 60 cents and \$3.5 per minute.

"As data compression technologies advance, telephones may be able to receive Internet-based on-line data signals. Perhaps some equipped global telephones will broadcast live pictures via a miniature monitor screen as well," the Globalstar executive said.

Due credit should be given to the efforts of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). This organization has taken a leading role in the realization of the global village dream. The ITU organizes, supervises and sets the standards for global telecommunications. It researches and coordinates the gathering and distribution of information regarding the state of the planet's telecommunications.

Every four years the ITU organizes the Telecom expo and conference in Geneva, the single most important show on telecommunications. Thousands of companies flock there to take a peak into the future of communications, detecting future trends and emerging new technologies. ■

JEBA Way to Europe

AMMAN (Star)—The Jordan-Europe Business Association (JEBA) is a non-profit organization which aims to enhance business relations between Jordan and the countries of the European Union. The Association's objectives include:

■ Promoting contacts and cooperation between the Jordanian private sector and their counterpart in the EU countries, with special emphasis on investment and joint projects in industry, commerce and other services.

■ Familiarizing Jordan's private sector with European Union programs, including aid programs that can be of benefit to Jordan, and with trends in

Europe's economic and trade policies. This will be achieved through seminars, workshops.

■ Representing the interests of its members before Jordanian and European decision-makers.

■ Facilitating information on the European Partnership programs and the participation of Jordanian businesspersons in them.

JEBA has elected Mohamed Fayez al Khatib president, Riad al Khouri vice-president, Anwar Obaidat secretary, Mohamed Dahlan treasurer and Abdelwahab Abuhijleh and Ali Kasay.

JEBA membership comprises three categories:

Full membership. The applicant should be a Jordanian businessperson (from the private sector who is not less than 25 years of age and who has adequate qualifications, a good reputation, and the wish to serve the objectives of the Association. Applications must be supported by the recommendation of two full members of the Association. The Board reviews applications that satisfy all requirements and decides on them by a two-thirds majority of members present.

There is also honorary membership, given to members nominated by the Board in recognition of their standing in the community, and who may be of benefit to the Association.

There is associate membership, given on the decision of the Board by a majority vote of members present. ■

Arab Bank, set for an even brighter future

IN 1995 the Arab Bank Group achieved outstanding results and crossed another milestone. The group maintained its above-normal progress in earning and asset growth. Net income after tax increased by 19.9% to reach \$168.0 million from \$141.2 million in 1994. Net income to equity ratio rose to 13.3% from 12.0%. Return on assets ratio improved to 1.2% against 1.0% in the previous year. Total balance sheet improved to \$22.9 billion from \$20.5 billion in 1994. Shareholders' equity reached \$1,267.9 million recording an increase of 7.4%. Risk-weighted capital adequacy ratio improved to 14.44% from 13.65%. Customer deposits grew by 8.1% to reach \$8.8 billion. The policy of the group to increase its productive assets resulted in an improvement of \$ 965.9 million and 18.9% in loan portfolio which reached \$ 6.1 billion. Liquidity ratio remained at its usually high level recording 48.5%.

The Arab Bank Group continued to expand its network in 1995. A joint venture, agreement for the establishment of Arab Palestine Investment Bank was signed on 6 December 1995 in Frankfurt. Its purpose is to serve the Palestinians and develop their economy. In addition to increasing the number of operating branches in the West Bank and Gaza to 11, six new offices opened in Jordan as well as a new branch in Valencia, Spain and an office in Cyprus.

The Arab Bank Group is looking to the future with determination and confidence. The progress made in 1995 should be exceeded in the coming years. ■

ABC expands in Kuwait

THE PRESIDENT and Chief Executive of Arab Bank Corporation (ABC), Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jubair, led a team of senior ABC executives on a visit to Kuwait from 10-12 March, 1996, as part of an extensive marketing campaign in the country.

Founded in 1980, ABC enjoys successful business banking relationships in the international and domestic financial markets. The management of the ABC is striving to strengthen relations with Kuwait during the marketing campaign.

ABC is the Arab world's biggest bank in assets, reporting assets of \$21.3 billion in 1995. Its net profit of \$116 million for 1995, 10 percent above previous year's \$105 million.

Shares of ABC are traded on the Bahrain, Pakistan, Kuwait, stock exchanges. Trading on the Kuwait Exchange began this January, when ABC was the first company to list. All ABC's shares were placed with individual and institutional investors combined public offering and international private placement. This is the first of its kind of an Arab bank financial institution.

The principal operating subsidiaries of the ABC are: Banco Atlantico S.A. in Spain, ABC International Bank plc in the United Kingdom, International Bank of Asia Limited in Hong Kong, Arab Bank, Ltd. in London, and the Commercial Bank in Germany. ABC Bank, Ltd. in Mexico, S.A.M. in Mexico, C.B. Bank, Corporation (Jordan) in Amman, Investment & Services Co. (I.S.C.) in Bahrain. ■

IPC and AMG Publication on investment opportunities in Jordan

AMMAN (Star)—As part of the drive to promote investment in Jordan and introduce the country's potential to the international business community, the Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC), in cooperation with Advanced Marketing Group (AMG), are producing a publication entitled *Investment Opportunities in Jordan*. This publication covers a wide range of topics regarding the investment climate in the country and will serve as a guide to foreign companies seeking to invest in Jordan.

This publication will be a follow-up to *Private Sector Investment Opportunities*, a book which was produced for distribution at the Amman Economic Summit. The new publication is more thoroughly researched and comprehensive to attract the different sectors of the international business community to the investment potentials in the country.

The three volumes of the publication will each cover a different aspect of the investment scene in Jordan. The first, prepared by expert consultants, will highlight the new investment climate in the country by detailing such issues as the role of the MENA region in relation to the rest of the world, while presenting Jordan as a regional base.

The first volume will also highlight the new laws and regulations pertaining to foreign investment and the different services available in the country. This will present foreign businesspersons with an account of Jordan's advancement in this field.

The second volume will present profiles of prominent

Jordanian companies seeking foreign investment and their desired fields of cooperation.

The final volume will cover profiles of projects that companies have to offer to the foreign investor. This will give these projects the exposure necessary for their implementation.

This publication will be an essential tool at business conferences, especially the Cairo Summit later this year, and will also be distributed to members of in-coming delegations, and to Jordan's embassies abroad.

Ten thousand copies will be produced, 1000 of which will be sent to the world's top 1000 companies and 2000 to the participants in the Amman Economic Summit.

A site has been taken on the Internet through which this publication will be transmitted and thousands of messages will be sent promoting it to potential counterparts. ■

Ayoubi steel for comfort

AYOUBI Steel Factory Co. is a private shareholding business and a leading producer of steel office furniture and storage systems in Jordan since 1958.

The company has a modern plant in the Amman Industrial City—Sahab, and has a production area of 4000m². Its yearly processing capacity is around 1000 tons of steel, and its employees are 60. The company has one wholesale outlet and three retail outlets in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid. At present 80% of its production is sold in Jordan, while 20% is exported to neighboring regional markets.

Products include:

■ Office furniture: Desks, filing cabinets and cupboards. The company makes custom-made items.

■ Sales: Ayoubi steel produces seven different sizes for office and home use; three sizes of specially enforced strong steel and custom-made strong room doors for banks and jewelers. It produces fire resistant safes for hanging files.

■ Storage systems: Pallet racks slotted angles and shelves and mobile shelving units. ■

Business Chronicle

In line with the market economy

A NEW report from the Planning Ministry confirms that the Government is determined to introduce a new package of economic reforms. The report suggests that such regulations would aim to give greater punch to customs, free-trade zones, and the Amman Financial Market. The aim is clear, to attract Arab and foreign capital into the country.

Though this is a justified economic policy in any country, the immediate questions that arise are, in whose interest this policy would be, and who the beneficiaries are. In ordinary cases, there would be no substantial difference between the interests of the people and the state in a democratic country. But, the launching of such legislative reforms in a country that is still languishing under the burden of foreign debt raises the issue of who is going to pay for these debts. Under the continuous price hikes of basic materials in Jordan, whatever inflow comes to the country would never help improve the living standards of the people. This inflow will certainly be siphoned off to foreign debt repayment.

The Merrill Lynch Corp. has praised Jordan's economic performance during the past years and its adoption of World Bank and IMF recommendations.

This included the reduction of Jordan's foreign debt and interest installments from \$1,213 million in 1989 to \$302 million in 1995. But these results were not attributed to a real national economic development as much as to the writing off or rescheduling of these foreign debts. No one can endorse an assumed 6% annual growth of the GNP in 1995, while salaries remained as they were, the sales tax was enforced, prices continued to rise, unemployment remained unsolved, and poverty still inflicts about 20% of the population.

The Planning Ministry can recommend the improvement of the country's economic performance under the new circumstances, but it should be more obliged to do so on the basis of economic and social realities rather than in connivance with the World Bank. Indeed, the Government will definitely obtain the people's support for its economic reforms only if it persuades them of their value. Upper hand imposition of regulations will never bring about good fruits to the economy or the people.

The people know very well that the country will pay debts for many years to come. However, they believe they would convincingly pay their share once they know their role and defined contribution in this long-term process. Keeping the people under unclear policies of economic development would cause unnecessary repercussions. Interaction between the Government and the public at large is one of the main dimensions of success for the state's economic programs. The situation in agriculture is a crystal clear example.

The reduction by 2.8% of total consumer consumption in 1995 in comparison with that of 1994 doesn't necessary mean an increase in national savings, especially if the cost of living is realistically considered. Should that be taken as a token, one should seriously think of the reasons behind the sharp drop in investment and commercial companies at the Ministry of Industry and Trade in 1995 over the previous year, and how many millions of JDs were lost.

Planning for a comprehensive and effective economic development should start from the concrete socio-economic realities, and not be bound to political dimensions or recommended by foreign powers. Everybody knows that World Bank and IMF recommendations for economic reforms in Jordan, and in many other developing countries, proceed firmly from political aims. Jordanian people's political aims should likewise be taken into consideration. The latter are not isolated from regional and international developments. ■

Spain gearing up for business in area

AN IMPORTANT group of businesspersons from the Spanish region of Catalonia visited Jordan recently. The delegation, led by the Fundacio Empresa Catalunya, Europa i America (FECEA) of Barcelona, held a series of high level meetings with top economic and business figures in Amman. Members of the delegation met with, among others, Burhan Dajani, director of the Federation of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture; Dr. Bassam Saket and Kamal Kalkish, respectively chairman and vice-chairman of the Jordan Trade Association; the president and board of directors of the Jordan Europe Business Association; and a large number of individual Jordanian firms. The delegation, which was led by Rafael Crespi of FECEA and co-organized by Adrian Mac Liman in Barcelona and Riad al Khouri in Amman, included representatives of the following leading Catalan companies: Gesinge & Co., Topsale, Caves Freixenet, Josep Belio Elroz, Europaper, Emprenas Consultores Asociados, Puertas Norma, and Secar. Among the visit's highlights was a lunch hosted by the Spanish ambassador to Jordan. The group also had a chance to relax during tours of Jarash and Petra.

The delegation closed its visit to Jordan at a farewell dinner hosted by the Jordan Europe Business Association at the Commodore Hotel. Commenting on the visit, Riad al Khouri, director of MEBA Ltd and co-organizer, stressed that "the importance of Europe to Jordan is absolutely crucial. This delegation, made up of top Catalan firms, is another example of the growing European interest in the region in general and the Jordanian economy in particular." ■



"Lower, lower!"

MARKET WATCH 9-12 March

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
▲ Middle East Complex ▲ Arab Financial Investment ▲ United for Cigars	▲ Jordan Gulf Bank ▲ Middle East Complex ▲ Real Estate Investment	▲ Intermediate Petro-Chem ▲ National Plastic Factor ▲ National Slaughter house	▲ Middle East Complex ▲ Arab Center for Pharm. ▲ Intermediate Petro-Chemicals
▲ Arab Steel Pipes Industry ▲ Middle East Develop. & Trade ▲ Arab Medical Appliances	▲ Arab Steel Pipes Industry ▲ Arab Chemical Investment ▲ United Chemical Industry	▲ Middle East Bank ▲ Arab Steel Pipes Industry ▲ Business Bank	▲ Canal General Trading & Storage ▲ Arab Electrical Industry ▲ Nayzak Dies & Moulds
General Price Pointer: 152.140 Trade Volume: 1062695 Stock Volume: 784140	General Price Pointer: 152.480 Trade Volume: 808670 Stock Volume: 573129	General Price Pointer: 151.980 Trade Volume: 607196 Stock Volume: 526131	General Price Pointer: 156.329 Trade Volume: 864322 Stock Volume: 512270
Highest Traded Stocks: ▲ Arab Bank 299,980 ▲ Al-Jazeera 240,000 ▲ Gulf Bank 89,910 ▲ Cement Factories 146,329			

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

Palestine Post

Edited by Marwan Al Asmar

A 180 degree turn

Mr Arafat, the president of the Palestine National Authority, final did it. A 180 degree turn is too simple to describe his meeting last week with a CIA delegation to discuss no less than the subject of Hamas and ways to curb its activities. However, Mr Arafat, with open arms, met the delegates at the Erez crossing, the point that divides the Gaza Strip from Israel. The PLO chairman is determined to put an end to the activities of Hamas. His call at the opening session of the Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) for an international conference on terrorism comes from the heart. Meanwhile, Mr Marwan Kanafani, the former press advisor to Mr Arafat and now a member of the PLC, tried to soften the tone a bit. Hamas was a political organization and we respect its political point of view he said and added that political opposition against the peace process is allowed. However, he emphatically said "We (PNA) will strongly oppose anyone who takes up arms in the face of Palestinian agreement to respect to the peace process." But condemnation has continued in the wake of the attacks. The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs was the most outspoken. In a statement released to *The Star*, it said: "We as Palestinian academics condemn in the strongest possible terms the recent suicide attacks against Jerusalem. Asklakon and Tel Aviv. We send our deepest condolences to all the bereaved families and wounded. We condemn such attacks as morally indefensible and call the perpetrators to immediately desist from any further attacks."

Hamas receives aid from sources in UK

Israeli Military Intelligence said that Britain has become the major financial source of Hamas. The *Financial Times* said that the Israelis have obtained documents on an active large fund raising network in Britain to finance Hamas. They estimate that Hamas receives about \$70 million from sources abroad. The British deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine told the House of Commons last week that the authorities concerned are carefully watching Hamas activities in the UK. He added that the government would launch a tough investigation at the first evidence of any criminal activities.

Palestinian airport at last!

A Palestinian airport at Rafah in the Gaza Strip will become operational by May, the PNA Minister of Cooperation and International Planning Dr Basil Shaath said. It is understood that a Canadian technical team is helping to build the airport. Israeli has initially rejected the position of the airport which is near its borders thus explaining the delay. However, the Israeli government has subsequently given the PNA its blessing.

Israeli losses in wake of bombings

Israel sources said the cost of the Tel Aviv bombings is estimated at \$4 million. It is understood that 40 commercial shops, 150 flats and three banks were damaged, some seriously. Israeli tax inspectors came on the immediately to try to assess the damage and give financial compensation. Meanwhile, a source at the Central Bank of Israel said that foreign investment jumped from \$1.4 billion in 1994 to \$2.11 billion in 1995. This increase was the result of direct foreign investments in Israeli companies.

Police: A rough deal

The subject of police was high on the agenda last week in Hebron. It was reported that three Palestinian policemen who went off-duty were confronted by Israeli soldiers and beaten. In another area in Hebron, a similar incident occurred. Palestinian police later lodged a complaint to the Israeli military governor, regarding such incidents as acts of provocations. *Al Quds* said that the policemen were beaten despite the fact that they made it clear to the Israeli soldiers that they are police officers. In another development, the policeman that was taken in custody on the 21 January is to remain in prison for a further 21 days. The 21-year-old Firas Fayez Abed Al Rahman Al Al Arjah was taken from his home in Hailouh for no apparent reason.

Rats on the loose

One issue that the Palestine National Authority would have to deal with once it gains control of Hebron is the subject of rats. The people of Al Jabri, Al Sheikh, Al Qisbah and Bah Al Zawab neighborhoods in Hebron have been complaining about rats. Unwilling to wait for the arrival of the PNA, they have called for immediate action from the concerned health authorities, but it seems that no one is listening.

Israeli shoots himself because of Hamas bombing

A young Israeli is thought to have shot himself because of the latest Hamas bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. As a result of chronic depression, the 27-year-old student committed suicide. The police later found his body in his car.

Bombers for the after-life

An Anti-Israeli sentiment

The camp, like other refugee settlements on the West Bank, has long been a hotbed of anti-Israeli sentiment. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process has brought no change, no improvement in daily life, and, though the camp is technically under Palestinian Authority control, Israeli troops operate here freely.

By Scott Kraft
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

AL FAWAR REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank—To prepare for the happiest—and last—day of his life, Majdi Abu Wardeh, 19, left the home of concrete blocks that he shared with his parents and nine brothers and sisters in this ramshackle refugee camp. Awaiting him, he knew, was spiritual and physical bliss beyond his imagination, an exalted status next to God, and, among other delights, awaiting his family, he was sure, was a lifetime of honor and respect. But first he had a job to do. He traveled north to Ramallah for his final training. Then, on 25 February, a Sunday morning two days later, Abu Wardeh squeezed onto the crowded No. 18 bus in downtown Jerusalem. He would have been wearing his finest clothes, as martyrs do, and, beneath them, a sturdy vest packed dynamite. Minutes later, he exploded, killing himself and 25 others.

"Of course, we are all proud of what he did," Nasim Abdelrazik, 19, one of Abu Wardeh's best friends, said coolly this week. "Given the chance, we'd do the same."

In the past three years, at least 25 young Palestinians—four in the past two weeks—have made the journey to martyrdom, blowing up themselves and mostly Jewish bystanders for a promised trip to paradise. And few doubt that there are dozens if not hundreds more willing to follow their example, carrying out missions so simple, impossible to stop and hugely disruptive to the Middle East peace process.

Trapped in this new wave of bombings, Israelis as well as many Palestinians remain frightened and baffled by the phenomenon. Who are these

suicide bombers?

And why, in numbers unprecedented even in the modern history of Islamic fundamentalism, are so many young men willing to blow themselves up?

Abu Wardeh was typical of those willing to carry out the suicide missions. Almost all have been young men, 18 to 26 years old, from large, poor families in communities with high unemployment, according to security experts.

They attend mosque and have strong, though not rabid, Islamic beliefs. And they are supporters, though rarely leaders, of one of the two main radical Islamic movements, Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

These bombers came of age during the intifada, the bloody Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Some had relatives or close friends killed, injured or widowed by Israeli security forces. While most of the bombers were previously unknown to the police, all have known the punishing presence of the Israeli army and the day-to-day humiliation of roadblocks and identity checks.

For such young men, overwhelmed by hopelessness, hatred and the certainty of paradise in a life beyond, death carries a glamorous appeal.

Majdi Abu Wardeh lived his short life in the Al Fawar refugee camp, a few miles south of Hebron and an hour drive from Jerusalem. The camp was created at the base of a rocky slope to house Palestinians who were forced from their homes



Abu Wardeh



Sarhane

when Israel was formed in 1948.

Today, almost 40 years later, 6,000 people are still here, living in a jumble of concrete homes on narrow alleys and rutted streets that surround the sandstone minaret of a mosque. Many homes still do not have electricity or running water, garbage is dumped in open pits, fewer than two dozen people here have permits to work in Israel's more prosperous cities.

The camp, like other refugee settlements on the West Bank, has long been a hotbed of anti-Israeli sentiment. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process has brought no change, no improvement in daily life, and, though the camp is technically under Palestinian Authority control, Israeli troops operate here freely.

"The young men still feel as if they are strangers in the area," said Mohammed Abu Awad, a father of a young man who knew the bomber. "This situation is

summed up in one question: 'What can you expect from our young guys who have no work, no land and no future?' They know they will never get out of here alive."

Support for "martyrs," as Hamas calls its suicide bombers, is starkly evident here. Some residents carry a photograph of one or another "shahid," or martyr, in lockers or in their hill-folds—just as Muslims elsewhere do for martyred, fallen war heroes. "We believe they are fighting for our rights," one resident explained.

The graffiti on one wall in the camp reads: "News for the Jews: The 'Engineer' is not dead." Yehiya Ayash, the mustache-bomb-maker for Hamas known as "The Engineer," was assassinated late last year, probably by Israeli security forces. Hamas said the recent Jerusalem bomb attacks were designed to avenge his death.

Abu Wardeh had been a handsome young man, with combed-back black hair and an

angelic, boyish face. The son of a teacher at the local UN-run school, he had finished high school, a notable achievement in this camp, and was on the verge of completing a vocational school course in Hebron, where he was learning to lay floor tiles.

A week before the bombing, he got into trouble at school for placing a firecracker under the desk of a teacher. The teacher threatened to expel him, but Abu Wardeh's friend Abdelrazik, also a student, persuaded the instructor to reconsider. "I guarantee he'll be good in class," Abdelrazik told him: the two friends later shared a laugh about that incident.

Abu Wardeh was brought into the suicide mission by a cousin, Mohammed Abu Wardeh, a student at the Ramallah Teacher's College. (The cousin was arrested, convicted and sentenced this week to life in prison at hard labor.)

The new recruit was joined by another prospective martyr: Ibrahim Sarhane, 26, a friend and a Hamas member in the camp. Sarhane, a tall, slender man, also came from a large, devout family. His father had died years before, and his mother once worked as a janitor in an Israeli hospital but was forced to quit due to a heart ailment, friends and relatives say.

When his mother lost her job, Sarhane left Hebron University, where he was studying Islam, and went to work as a clerk in a spice store in Hebron to support the family. He had been arrested several times for Hamas activity but had never

been charged, the Israelis say.

The rewards of martyrdom were well-understood by Abu Wardeh and Sarhane. Islamic writings and the Koran describe paradise as a place full of wonderful fruits, as well as beautiful virgins, called "houriyat." And while ordinary Muslims must make their case with the angels in paradise, the faithful believe that martyrs ascend directly to a preferred position close to God.

For the families, too, there are benefits. Many Muslims believe that a martyr can bring 70 of his friends and relatives into heaven, no questions asked. And, in the Palestinian community, families of martyrs are treated as honored citizens, worthy of great respect.

In Palestinian communities, the death of a martyr has in the past been routinely celebrated in a "wedding" party, where the bitter coffee of traditional Islamic mourning is replaced by the sweet coffee, cakes and candies of happy occasions and where a grieving mother gamely smiles through tear-streaked faces.

Those celebrations play another important role in society, namely to encourage future suicide bombers. Because of that, the Israeli government has recently banned the festivities, evicted families of bombers from their homes, arrested dozens of relatives and sealed off the houses. For two years, the government also has refused to release the bodies of suicide bombers to families for burial.

The family homes of Abu Wardeh and Sarhane have been sealed: beige-colored metal plates cover the windows and the front doors were blown-torched shut. Their parents, most of their siblings and other relatives have been detained. Blood samples have been taken to verify their identities.

For now, the camp is under a strict curfew. Israeli troops clomp through the streets, barking at residents bold enough to stick their heads out of their windows. And yet the actions of Abu Wardeh and Sarhane are widely admired.

"You have to have a lot of courage and a strong belief to become a martyr," explained Jihad Taha, Sarhane's uncle. "When the Israelis say this is a camp of terrorists, we are proud. It's difficult to show our feelings but, inside, we feel these men are martyrs. We hold the 'wedding' celebration in our heart."

Hamas vows more violence

Arafat meets CIA

By Marjorie Miller
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

JERUSALEM—As Hamas vowed to carry out more suicide bombings in defiance of this week's world summit against terrorism, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met last Saturday with senior CIA officials to discuss how to combat the Islamic extremists.

Arafat spoke for about an hour with the CIA delegation headed by Deputy Director George J. Tenet at an office near the Erez checkpoint, on the border between Israel and the Palestinian-run Gaza Strip.

Israeli television reported that Arafat had asked the CIA for technical and logistics support in fighting Hamas, which has claimed responsibility for four suicide bombings in the past two weeks that have taken 62 lives and threatened the sur-

vival of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords.

The CIA offered Arafat information on Hamas' network of support throughout the Middle East, Israel's Channel 2 reported.

Hamas' military wing said last Saturday that it has decided to resume suicide bombings in Israel, calling them "martyrdom attacks" against the Zionists.

In a leaflet circulated in the Gaza Strip, Hamas said that a crackdown by Arafat would "destroy completely any understanding of future agreement" between Hamas and the Palestinian leadership. And it condemned Wednesday's "summit of the peacemakers" to be hosted by President Clinton and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as "an international conspiracy against the struggle of the people and an attempt to save the Zionists from defeat."

Arafat leaders at first refused

whether to attend the summit as Mubarak attempted to broaden its appeal by casting it as a forum on the entire peace process, not just terrorism in Israel.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian leader and his West Bank security chief were locked in a dispute, reportedly over how to crack down on the Islamic militants; subsequently, the head of security Jibril Al Rjoub was sacked from his job by Arafat.

Among those who have agreed to attend the one-day anti-terrorism conference in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el Sheikh are Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, His Majesty King King Hussein, PNA President Yasser Arafat, France's President Jacques Chirac, Britain's Prime Minister John Major and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. But the success of the conference

will be measured in the number of other Arab countries that agree to stand up with them to protest terrorism against Israel. US officials have said that Tunisia, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states would take part. Morocco's King Hassan also will attend.

Mubarak said that he is trying to persuade Syrian President Hafez Assad to participate but that "he is still thinking it over."

Syria, which is officially at war with Israel, has not condemned the Hamas suicide bombings. Several Hamas leaders live in the Syrian capital of Damascus, and in the Lebanese capital of Beirut. Syria is a central Lebanon and allows Israeli-backed Hezbollah guerrillas there to continue their fight against Israeli soldiers occupying southern Lebanon.

In his effort to draw more Arab countries to Sharm el Sheikh, Mubarak tried to broaden the focus of the summit from the topic of terrorism to the issue of peace.

"Terrorism is here," Mubarak said at a conference to support the peace process, and "we must meet or the world will collapse."

A Hamas representative in Lebanon, Mustapha Barghout, charged that the summit "to combat terrorism" organized by Israel and the United States is "a Zionist conspiracy to destroy the Palestinian people and to wipe out the state of Palestine."

In the past week, Hamas has carried out a series of bombings, including a suicide bombing in the West Bank town of Ramallah that killed 25 people.

The latest, Ibrahim one of seven Hamas and a pharmacist in the Islamic Community in Gaza, was arrested home last Friday in a family confinement.

Palestinian security forces also arrested Bahar, another co-founder of Hamas, and a professor at the Islamic University of Gaza.

Gaza, but relatives denied it.

The only leading member of Hamas' political organization still out of jail in Gaza is Sayed Abu Musameh. The arrests, along with raids on mosques, Islamic clubs and welfare institutions that make up the Hamas social infrastructure, mark a turnaround for Arafat.

Before the recent bombings, Arafat was negotiating with Hamas political leaders, trying to get them to form a legal political party while trying to marginalize the military wing into eventual extinction.

But he has come under tremendous pressure from the Israelis and Americans to crack down on all of Hamas' military and civilian infrastructure or risk an end to the peace process.

Israel also has threatened to move into Palestinian-ruled areas and make arrests if Arafat fails to do so.

The arrests, along with Israel's closure of Palestinian territories, have provoked anger among Palestinians who say they are under occupation, just as they were before the peace accords were signed.

The closure, which bars tens of thousands of Palestinian workers from their jobs in Israel, costs the Palestinian economy up to \$6 million daily in lost wages and trade, Arafat has said. Members of the newly elected Palestinian Legislative Council say they fear a backlash.

In the West Bank, leaders of Arafat's Fatah organization issued a call for an end to the closure, calling it a "huge policy" and warning the Israeli government that it strengthens the influence of extremist groups.

The Fatah leaders called for mass demonstrations against the Israeli measures in all Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps, under the slogan, "Yes to Peace... No to the Siege."

Adding to the tension and sense of instability in the West Bank were reports that Arafat had demanded the resignation of the West Bank's chief of preventive security, Jibril Rajoub. Something that was confirmed later on.

Regional view

Participants to the 7th conference of the Arab Union of Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Producers called on their governments to adopt a common approach of negotiations with the World Trade Organization (WTO) in regard to their membership. The conference, held in Cairo earlier this month under the title "For an Arab Pharmaceutical Common Market within the GATT Agreements," called on Arab states to honor the 10-year provisional period allowed for the developing countries to implement these agreements, especially those dealing with the protection of intellectual property of food, medical, and biological products. The participants in the event also called upon their states to enact special laws on patent, of public health and nutrition to preserve vital Arab interests.

The Arab Republic of Yemen recently adopted new regulations which abolish import-export restrictions. In a new policy of trade liberalization, a republican decree has been issued to oblige commercial banks to deal with businessmen without interference or obstacles. However, what is required from Yemeni importers is to have a valid and registered trade license, and to open a bank credit for that specific importation.

Sudan is worried about an expected UN sanctions because of three Egyptians accused of attempting to kill President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa last year. They are alleged to be hiding in Sudan. Speaking to reporters, the Sudanese Islamist leader Hasan Al Turabi said his country has done its best to satisfy the UN. He added that he is not concerned with sanctions. Sudan is self-reliant, and such sanctions may lead to the promotion of economic activities in the country. He told his people not to worry as Sudan has 100 million heads of livestock, and plenty of grains.

At Sharm el-Sheikh question is how to deal with Hamas

By Nicholas Goldberg
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

RAMALLAH, West Bank—Raed Sharabi was a serious but unexceptional student, nobody's idea of a hero, whose only distinction was that he called his classmates to prayers each day.

He came from a poor Palestinian village called Borka, near the West Bank city of Nablus. Like others at his school, he was a supporter of the militant Islamic group Hamas, but, friends and acquaintances said, he was not noticeably fervent on the subject.

Yet on 3 March, Sharabi packed 15 kilograms of explosives into a duffel bag, dressed up like an Israeli soldier and set off for Jerusalem. A few hours later, he blew himself to small pieces on a crowded Jaffa Street bus, taking with him 19 passengers and, perhaps, the best chance for peace in the Middle East.

Wednesday, the world's most powerful men met in the Egyptian coastal city of Sharm el-Sheikh on the Gulf of Aqaba in an effort to fight back. At their summit conference, President Clinton and heads of state from around the world reviewed anti-terrorism measures, attempt to strengthen them

and try to wrest the fate of the peace process from the hands of zealous martyrs such as Sharabi. In the wake of four bombings in nine days that killed 58 people, Israel and the United States and most of the other countries participating in the summit have declared war on the group masterminding the terror campaign: Hamas.

"We must not let the terrorists in the Middle East have the victory they seek—the death of the very hope for peace," Clinton said in a speech in New York earlier this week. "I am going to Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt to combat the merchants of hatred with every means at our command."

Yet even as they arrive to plot strategy, few know much about the shadowy organization they have come to destroy. They know it is responsible for at least three of the four bombings of the past two weeks. They know it retains the support of a significant number of Palestinians, even in the age of peace. They believe it is internally divided over the best path to take in the future—but that it has long been devoted to the destruction of Israel. And they know, to their horror, that in recent years, Hamas has been able to recruit several dozen fervent young Palestinians like Raed Sharabi willing to blow themselves up in

the name of Allah and in hopes of scuttling the Middle East peace process. "Hamas is not an organization," said Ami Ayalon, the new head of the Shin Bet internal security force in testimony to a Knesset committee last week. "It is an idea."

The name Hamas means "zeal" or "devotion" but is also an acronym for the group itself: the Islamic Resistance Movement. It came to prominence during the intifada—the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation in the 1980s—but had its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic organization that had been operating in Palestine since the mid-1930s. A key role model is Izzeddin al-Qassem, imam of the Izzal Mosque in Haifa, who founded a militant group called the Black Hand to fight British imperialism and Jewish Zionism in the 1930s.

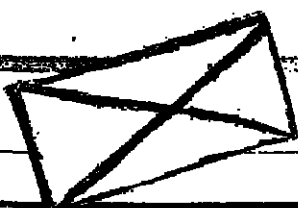
The organization's political goals are relatively straightforward. According to its covenant, drafted in 1988, Hamas hopes to create an Islamic society in Palestine run according to the rules of Islamic law and the Koran, and, at the same time, to liberate Palestine from the hands of the Zionists. Although some Hamas officials have indicated they would be satisfied with a total Israeli withdrawal from the

West Bank and Gaza Strip, the covenant says they will not lay down their weapons until Israel ceases to exist. Hamas vehemently opposes the peace process. Its military wing, the Izzeddin al-Qassem brigades, has struck 14 times inside Israel since the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords were signed in 1993.

Few outsiders realize that Hamas is more than a band of terrorists in the Izzeddin al-Qassem brigades. It is part of a much broader political and social movement that has long provided much-needed services, charities, orphanages, welfare, schools, sports clubs and health clinics are all part of the Hamas infrastructure—and are all services that have traditionally been ignored by the Israeli government in the quagmire of the occupied territories.

According to a senior Israeli military source, Hamas spends about 95 percent of the \$60 million that the movement raises annually on its social and cultural programs and only 5 percent on military operations.

Its fortunes rise and fall, but Hamas remains a very significant, institutionalized factor in Palestinian politics, society, culture and public opinion," said Ziad Abu-Amr, a member of the Palestinian Council and a professor of political science at Bir Zita University in Ramallah. "It's not going to be easy to dismantle even if its military wing is crushed, because it is basically a grass-roots movement which embraces an ideology which is not alien to the Palestinian people."



Attempt at the Taiwanese economic jugular

Chinese heavy-handedness fuels popular anger

By Keith B. Richburg
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

KEELUNG. Taiwan—Taiwanese sometimes refer to this congested port city as the "rain town" for its seemingly permanent mist, but now it has taken on a more dubious distinction as one of the flash points in a game of diplomatic muscle-flexing by mainland China's Communist leaders firing remote-guided ballistic missiles into a splash zone a few miles offshore.

But if Keelung sits perilously close to danger—the risk of an errant missile is ever-present—it is not obvious from the shrugs of defiance in the crowded seafood marketplace or from the cracked and weathered faces of the fishermen, dockworkers and vendors whose livelihoods would be seriously affected if the confrontation is prolonged.

"Everybody is a little worried, but there's no reason to be afraid," said Wang Chi-san, a dockworker in a white hard hat and blue overalls, who was busy helping unload a shipment of powerful Chinese-made grain alcohol.

"Just normal," is how a harbor policeman, Thomas Wong, described the day's activities, hours after a Chinese missile splashed down 21 miles offshore. "I don't think it will affect us."

The only one here who claims even to have been on hand to hear the first confirmed missile landing last Friday morning was a lighthouse attendant, Su Teh-sun, who described hearing a sound like an "exploding tire."

Most fishing boats stayed in the harbor Friday morning, heeding government warnings to steer clear of the missile landing zone.

Harbor bureau director Te-An Han said the only disruption to commercial shipping activities was the delayed arrival of one Japanese ship due in from Okinawa.

In general, shipping industry sources have reported little disruption to their normal routine, with only some delays caused by ships taking more circuitous routes to avoid the free-fire zones. Air traffic was unaffected.

In an effort to bully Taiwanese as they prepare to vote later this month in this island's first presidential election, China's leadership has announced eight days of military tests, sending M9 missiles into two designated splash zones near Keelung, in Taiwan's north, and close to the larger southern port of

Kaohsiung. Three missiles landed in the early morning hours today—one off Keelung and two off Kaohsiung, with more expected in the coming days. The tests have drawn condemnation from around the world, including a strong denunciation from the White House.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin said that China will not halt its struggle against an independent Taiwan until the island abandons policies that can be interpreted as moving toward independence.

"Our struggle will not stop for a single day so long as Taiwanese authorities do not cease activities to split the motherland for a single day," the official New China News Agency quoted Jiang as telling delegates to the National People's Congress, or parliament.



Even Taiwan's stock market, which usually fluctuates up and down to reflect uncertainty in Taiwan's relations with China, Friday seemed to defy expectations. Stocks posted gains of 54.35 points, up 1.14 percent.

Those outward signs of defiance, though, masked signs of anxiety. Many Taiwanese reportedly were trying to convert their money into US dollars, and last Friday most banks were reporting shortages of US currency and imposing strict withdrawal limits. One bank was reported to have run out of dollars.

Prosperous Taiwan boasts \$89 billion in foreign exchange reserves, among the largest in the world. One report said the government has spent \$1.2 billion trying to shore up the value of the currency, the New Taiwan dollar, or NT.

There is also a risk that the economic effects could worsen if the conflict drags on. In Kaohsiung, Wu Min-hsiung, acting director of the local fishermen's association, was quoted as saying the fishing industry could lose a million US dollars over the next week.

The object of Beijing's ire is Taiwan's president, Lee Teng-hui, who is campaigning hard for re-election in balloting 23 March. Lee has infuriated China with his globe-trotting diplomatic campaign to highlight this long-isolated island's international profile. China's Communist leaders fear his efforts come dangerously close to seeking full-fledged independence for the island of 21 million people.

Lee remained on the campaign trail last Friday, not commenting directly on the missile firings. Instead, he left it to a stream of other government officials to denounce the mainland for its attempts at "intimidation" and to urge residents to remain calm.

China seems to be hoping the missile tests will frighten enough voters away from Lee to reduce his share of the vote.

But in the past, such attempts to manipulate the Taiwanese have misfired: whenever China has launched missiles or staged military exercises, Lee's popularity has gone up. In times of crisis and confrontation—and this is the most serious so far—Taiwanese rally around their silver-haired leader, who projects an air of calm authority in standing up the mainland.

Some analysts predict that China's heavy-handedness may only serve to fuel popular anger, and perhaps increase somewhat the vote share of the presidential campaign's only avowedly pro-independence candidate, Peng Ming-min. Still, no one thinks Lee will lose—and they say China's bullying may actually give his campaign a boost.

China's missiles seen as much internal as external

By Rone Tempest
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

BEIJING—China's missiles are aimed at Taiwan, part of an intimidation campaign as the island prepares for its first direct presidential election. But the true target of this week's massive military exercises is at least as much internal as it is external.

"I think a lot of this has to do with the grand succession battle we've heard so much about," a Western diplomat here said of China's firing of three M-9 missiles into the Taiwan Strait last Friday. "The central leadership is trying to curry favor with the military."

As 91-year-old Deng Xiaoping slowly fades from the scene, a handful of Communist Party leaders are vying to take his position at the helm of the Beijing regime. Leading the pack is China's president, Jiang Zemin, who also serves as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party.

In a succession struggle, none of the top leaders can afford to appear soft on the core issue of Chinese nationalism—the long-sought repatriation of Taiwan to the mainland. Support of the military is key.

This was abundantly clear last June when Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui made his controversial "private" visit to the United States to attend a reunion at Cornell University.

In the aftermath of the visit, which provoked China to withdraw its ambassador from Washington, Jiang came under fire from the military for not taking a strong enough stand in response. This reportedly

cost the 69-year-old Jiang, a former Shanghai mayor with no direct military experience, some of the support in the army that he had painstakingly collected after being named Deng's handpicked successor in 1989.

As a result, Jiang spent much of last year attempting to recoup by directing an increasingly aggressive campaign of harassment against Taiwan.

In July and again in August, China conducted a series of missile tests off Taiwan's coast. In October, Jiang was shown on state television somberly reviewing massive military exercises at an unnamed locale in eastern China.

The unnamed missiles fired last Friday targeted areas off Taiwan's two biggest ports, Kaohsiung and Keelung, provoking a nervous and testy response from Japan and other neighbors. Like those of a marksman setting his sights, the missile shots were bracketed at the northern and southern extremes of the island, proving the Chinese military capability to reach any part of the heavily populated territory.

In a speech before deputies of the National People's Congress, Jiang vowed to continue the hard line against Taiwan.

"Our struggle will not stop for a single day so long as Taiwanese authorities do not cease activities to split the motherland," Jiang said.

It is no accident that the week of military maneuvers and missile firings overlaps with the meeting of the National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People here. The congress, which meets

once every five years, elects the Central Committee of the Communist Party, appoints members to the powerful Central Military Commission and names the general secretary of the party. As such, it is integrally involved in the political succession process.

The Taiwan crisis has given the current session, which opened last Tuesday, an extremely nationalistic tenor that was reflected in the opening address by Premier Li Peng.

"The question of Taiwan is China's internal affair," Li said. "China will brook no interference by outside forces under whatever pretext and in whatever form. We are in favor of and have consistently been working for peaceful reunification, but we shall not undertake to renounce the use of force."

US Secretary of Defense William J. Perry called the tests "reckless" and "an act of coercion." He said the Pentagon is using Navy ships and an Air Force spy plane to monitor the flight paths and electronic emissions of the Chinese missiles.

In one of the few direct references to the military actions in the Taiwan Strait, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said that Taiwanese residents need not "panic" although China's designated missile testing zone is at some points only 20 nautical miles from the island.

If Taiwan continues its steady push toward independent recognition in the world community, he said, the result could be a "real disaster."

Iranian Majlis elections

Vote marked by degree of anti-Americanism

By John Daniszewski
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

TEHRAN, Iran—There were no Americans on the ballot, but there was still a healthy whiff of anti-Americanism in the air last Friday as Iranians flocked to the polls to elect their fifth parliament since the takeover of the country by Islamists 17 years ago.

The main drama of the vote was whether a slate of pragmatic economic reformers aligned with President Hashemi Rafsanjani will gain ground against a strictly traditional clerical faction under the current parliament speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri. Never before in the Islamic republic's history were voters given such a clear choice of political programs.

But the election to choose the 270-seat Majlis, or parliament, also was trumpeted as a test of revolutionary fervor and one more chance for Iranians to defy the "arrogant power" of the United States—especially since their country is under new threat of international isolation following the recent wave of deadly bombings in Israel.

For the week preceding the election, newspapers close to the mullahs who now control parliament were urging voters to come out in large numbers, calling every vote cast "a bullet straight to the heart of our enemies."

"America and Israel have increased their propaganda pressure on Iran with the aim of making people less interested in the election," said Rafsanjani after casting his vote at the hall where the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the

father of Iran's Islamic revolution, used to greet visitors. "But experience shows that it has had the opposite effect."

By early last Saturday, the government indicated that turnout was heavy. More than half of Iran's 63 million people were eligible to cast ballots, in part because the voting age was recently lowered to 15. Definitive results are not expected until next week.

That the election happened four days after the United States accused Iran of providing financial and tactical support to Palestinian militants in Israel—charges vehemently denied here—helped fan an anti-American mood that affected even ordinary Iranians.

"At the beginning of the revolution, America began to be against Iran. From that time we realized that we cannot trust America, and we began to be against America," said 28-year-old Bezaad Hodeini, a Ministry of Jihad (Holy War) worker standing among voters at the Amir Mosque in central Tehran.

Another voter, a mother holding an infant to her black chador, made a distinction between the US government and its citizens.

"The United States government is our enemy, not the people of America," said Zarah Ali Akbari. "Some of them are against us, but not all."

Years after the uprising that deposed longtime US ally Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the specter of a sinister United States awaiting its chance to crush Iran remains a fixture in many minds. Clerics at Friday prayers and the state-

controlled media have provided a steady diet of anti-Americanism, making it a central tenet of the regime.

Although the Rafsanjani slate in Friday's election is considered slightly more open to the West than the present Majlis, there is no indication that there will be any attempt to repair the US-Iran relationship anytime soon.

In the current climate, diplomats said, that would be political suicide.

Nevertheless, one occasionally detects a note of regret among Iranian officials, many of whom lived in the United States before the revolution to escape the shah's secret police.

"There should be some lessening of tensions, a de-escalation," said Deputy Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, a 1981 graduate of San Francisco State University. "But, logically speaking, there should be a willingness on both sides."

So far the elections of 37 constituencies have been completed; there are still 13 more to go because the candidates did not receive the minimum votes required for winning.

The traditionalists, who dominated the last Majlis are again expected to be in the driver's seat. However, they together with the reformers have already received 80 percent of the votes cast.

Rafsanjani said the elections have been marred by a US-Israeli propaganda war against Iran with a view to divert the people's participation. However, he added, the election results proved that people were not affected by such propaganda.

US charge that Castro's 37-year-old regime is as unpredictable as ever

End of cold war has not dampened Cuba's military spending

By John Ward Anderson
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

HAVANA, Cuba—The view from the US Interests Section here offers a smashing vista of the Havana coast and skyline, punctuated by a gigantic billboard 300 yards down the road with a smug target.

"Mr Imperialist!" screams a beretted, gun-toting cartoon revolutionary to a growling Uncle Sam. "We have absolutely no fear of you!" That could be the same message drawn from saber rattling between Cuba and the United States that flared two weeks ago when the Communist government shot down two civilian aircraft as they flew over the water north of this capital.

But there could be a different interpretation as well: Fear might be precisely the reason that a small Caribbean island, which nevertheless is one of the most militarized nations in the world, would scramble MIG-29 fighter planes armed with advance missiles to shoot down unarmed Cessnas apparently with little or no warning.

"We are 90 miles from an enemy that is the world's only superpower, and which took three days to wipe out Iraq," Carlos Losada Jardin, 44, a former soldier who spent 37 months fighting with the Cuban army in Angola, said, explaining Cuba's large military and quick response.

A half-mile away, a 36-year-old unemployed schoolteacher in a one-room apartment that she shares with five family members offered a different explanation for what she called the country's paranoia: "They need a big military because they are afraid the people here will explode."

Whether to prevent another Bay of Pigs or to keep President Fidel Castro in power—or both—the military remains a linchpin of this society, a key employer and one of the Communist government's least corrupted components. A US government hackroom paper found that "in Latin America, only Brazil, with a popula-

tion 13 times greater, has a larger military," and concluded that Cuba is "one of the most highly militarized societies in the world."

A nation the size of Pennsylvania, with about 11 million people, Cuba is no longer the US national security threat it was in the 1960s, when it almost became a Soviet nuclear outpost, or in the 1970s and '80s, when it fomented communist insurrection in Latin America.

But the events of the last weeks underscore the deep US resentment that after other revolutions have died and the Soviet empire has crumbled, Castro's 37-year-old regime is as unpredictable as ever.

Coming after a recent warming trend in US-Cuban relations, the clash refocused attention on Cuba's repression of dissent and the recent arrest and harassment of human rights advocates, journalists and others. It also highlighted the growing influence of Cubans in domestic and US politics, the dangers still posed by a small but militarily powerful adversary just outside the Gulf of Mexico and the threat Cuba feels from the United States.

"You have the same kind of mentality that exists in Israel, where a small country is surrounded by powerful enemies," said Juan Antonio Blanco, a retired Cuban diplomat who runs a privately funded think tank in Havana. "There is not enough money or command support in Miami or Cuba to initiate a large invasion or uprising on the island. But there is



Castro

enough to provoke incidents that could put Cuba and the United States on a collision course."

"There is garrison-state mentality," said a diplomat, who asked not to be identified. "It's not credible that Cuba is going to be invaded by anybody except mosquitoes, so (the large military) is a way of maintaining control."

Born in revolutionary fervor in the late 1950s and early '60s, Cuba's mili-

tary today is feeling the pinch of the country's loss of Soviet economic support, forcing it to downsize and diversify. In addition to being defender, the military, led by Castro's younger brother and heir-apparent Raul, is branching into agriculture and tourism and is a leading advocate of the island's cautious-but-some say symbolically important economic changes.

Estimates of the size of Cuba's military vary—from 150,000 to about 170,000 active soldiers, with another 135,000 ready reserves. The number of active soldiers is about half what it was in the 1960s and has been cut by about 30,000 soldiers in the last few years, according to a 1995 consultant's report to the Pentagon. *The Military in Transition in Cuba*.

The report said the military's budget shrank from 18.9 percent of the government's total expenditures in 1985 to 15.5 percent in 1990, and could be as low as 10.2 percent today.

With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1989, Cuba lost its main trading partner and military ally. But its sophisticated military machine was in place: 240 planes (including MIG-23s and MIG-29s), 80 helicopters and 117 transport aircraft, 1,100 Soviet tanks, 1,700 cannon, 200 anti-aircraft missiles and more than 100 naval vessels, including three submarines. The consultant's report noted that

Cuba is too strapped to purchase new weapons or spare parts and will face critical maintenance problems in the years ahead. Even Raul Castro, who is defense minister, admitted in a 1993 interview with a Mexican reporter that "we have an army... that is too big and expensive in relation to the country's economic development."

That conclusion is driving a new program to diversify the military and expand its mission into commercial ventures, including restaurants, airlines, hotels, stores and farming, a military commercialization that other Latin American countries have tried and abandoned as unprofitable.

In 1992, Raul Castro was instrumental in instituting a program that allows farmers to sell surplus produce for profit, and the military has been active in agriculture in part to grow goods for sale in those markets.

While Raul Castro is considered by some to be one of the key advocates of change here—"It's the Cuban Armed Forces, Inc., with Raul as the CEO," said one diplomat—many analysts believe that Fidel Castro is vehemently opposed to any economic liberalization. Measures enacted in the last two years include permitting limited self-employment, foreign investment and trading in US dollars.

In recent months, according to analysts here, the Cuban president has started to slow or pull back on some of the shift, now that the country has emerged from the worst of its economic crisis. Some observers see that, combined with the shoot-down of the Brothers to the Rescue planes and the recent arrest and harassment of as many as 100 dissidents, there is a deliberate attempt by Castro's government to derail the new openings to the West as a way of consolidating power at home.

"The foreign enemy is blamed for all failures," said Elizardo Sanchez, a top human rights activist in Havana, claiming that the shoot-down of the two Cessnas and the subsequent stand-off with the United States was partially an attempt to divert the population's attention from internal problems.

Explosion outside London cemetery adds to bomb jitters

By William D. Montgomery
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

LONDON—An explosion outside a cemetery rocked central London early Sunday, adding to bomb jitters in the wake of two deadly IRA blasts last month that caused no injuries.

The blast took place in the grounds of the Earl's Court and South Kensington Police headquarters, a short distance from a large area around the city.

Scotland Yard said it was not clear if a bomb had exploded inside a trash can outside the Earl's Court cemetery and not far from the West Brompton railway station in Earl's Court.

There were few witnesses in the area on a cold, wet night, and police said they were satisfied that no other devices had been planted nearby.

The explosion did not fit the pattern of attacks by the IRA in that there was no advance warning.

Shaken by two Irish Republican Army bombs last month, London has been forced to move its police force to the IRA's chief reaction to a fresh Anglo-Irish peace initiative and calls for a renewed cease-fire.

February's bombs, which killed three people and wounded dozens, marked the end of a 17-month cease-fire by the IRA, which was protesting what it called British intransigence in the search for peace in Northern Ireland. Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Féin, the IRA's political arm, said Thursday that the Irish nationalists want negotiations but are prepared for "another 25 years of war" if necessary.

Neither Sinn Féin nor the IRA has said definitively whether the guerrillas will renew a cease-fire in their admission ticket to all-party peace talks summoned by Britain and Ireland and scheduled to begin June 10.

MARCH 1996

A special section offering
fresh perspectives on
global issues prepared for
The Star

THE WORLD PAPER

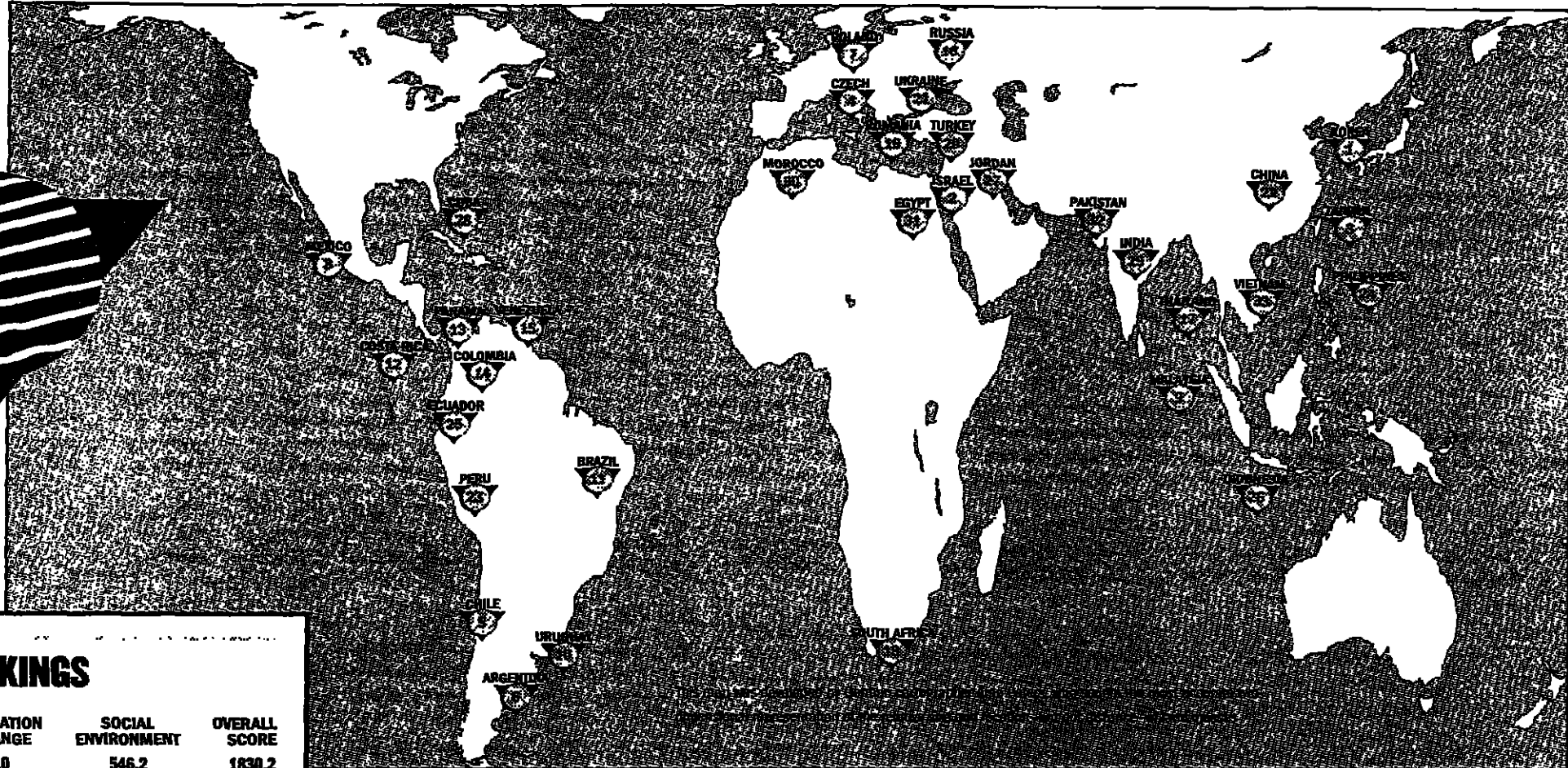
PRINTED IN FIVE LANGUAGES
ON FIVE CONTINENTS



Measuring the true wealth of nations...

WorldPaper initiative

The geometry of an equilateral triangle matches that of the WorldPaper Wealth of Nations Triangle Index. Balancing economics, social indicators and information exchange factors is a way of measuring what we treasure. The lines through the coin in the logo indicate flows of money between countries and continents. Compiled by Wilford Welch, Geoffrey Groesbeck and Tomoko Shibuya of World Times, the index will be reviewed, renewed and published quarterly.



TRIANGLE RANKINGS

	COUNTRY	ECONOMICS	INFORMATION EXCHANGE	SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	OVERALL SCORE
1	Korea	597.0	687.0	546.2	1830.2
2	Israel	514.5	669.0	560.1	1743.6
3	Taiwan	577.5	616.5	538.8	1732.8
4	Czech Republic	541.5	589.9	565.7	1697.1
5	Chile	495.5	578.5	538.2	1612.2
6	Argentina	533.4	572.5	499.4	1604.9
7	Poland	435.5	514.8	583.6	1533.9
8	Mexico	488.5	547.8	468.2	1504.5
9	Malaysia	578.5	472.3	452.3	1503.1
10	Uruguay	432.0	581.5	526.1	1489.6
11	Brazil	484.5	506.0	466.9	1457.4
12	Cyprus	418.0	486.3	546.1	1430.4
13	Panama	447.5	499.3	464.6	1411.4
14	Colombia	516.5	438.5	436.8	1391.8
15	Venezuela	484.5	504.8	463.4	1372.7
16	Russia	339.5	506.8	525.3	1371.6
17	Thailand	571.5	378.3	377.8	1327.6
18	South Africa	436.0	454.8	394.9	1285.7
19	Romania	291.0	427.8	478.5	1197.3
20	Turkey	425.5	385.5	383.0	1194.0
21	Ukraine	292.5	437.8	462.3	1192.6
22	China	523.5	345.8	318.8	1187.3
23	Peru	441.5	331.3	332.8	1105.6
24	Philippines	430.5	339.5	313.8	1083.8
25	Ecuador	397.0	360.8	376.3	1134.1
26	Indonesia	474.5	329.5	305.2	1089.2
27	Jordan	378.5	323.0	401.5	1083.0
28	Cuba	313.5	293.3	482.8	1058.8
29	India	450.0	383.5	278.2	1031.7
30	Morocco	384.8	289.5	368.1	972.8
31	Egypt	289.0	323.0	336.6	948.6
32	Pakistan	306.5	253.0	222.3	881.8
33	Vietnam	368.0	220.8	223.3	812.1

ECONOMICS

- NATIONAL ECONOMY**
 - Gross domestic product (\$US per capita)
 - Consumer Price Index increase (1987 = 100)
 - Purchasing power parity (real GDP per capita in \$US)
 - Male/female wage parity level
 - Annual inflation rate (%)
 - Gross domestic product growth (%)
 - Agricultural sector contribution to GDP growth (%)
 - Industrial sector contribution to GDP growth (%)
 - Services sector contribution to GDP growth (%)
- GOVERNMENT REVENUE & EXPENDITURE**
 - Tax revenues (as a % of GNP)
 - Government expenditures (as a % of GNP)
 - Overall government deficit/surplus (as a % of GNP)
- ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL PRACTICE**
 - Independent central bank?
 - Currency fully convertible?
 - Full central clearing services?
 - Full financial disclosure laws?
 - Securities exchange in operation?
- INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ECONOMY**
 - Foreign direct investment (in \$US billions)
 - Portfolio investment (in \$US billions)
 - Foreign debt service (as a % of GNP)
 - Total long-term debt outstanding (as a % of GNP)
 - Annual import growth (%)
 - Annual export growth (%)
 - Current account balance (in \$US millions)
 - Foreign reserves ex-gold (in \$US millions)

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- INFORMATION APPETITE**
 - Literacy rate
 - Newspaper readership (per 1000 inhabitants)
 - Secondary-level school enrollment (%)
 - College and university enrollment (%)
 - College students studying applied and natural sciences (%)
 - College students studying abroad (%)
 - English as primary language for business?
- INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE**
 - Radio ownership (per 1000 inhabitants)
 - Television ownership (per 1000 inhabitants)
 - Telephone ownership (per 1000 inhabitants)
 - PCs (residential) in use (per 1000 inhabitants)
 - Faxes in use (per 1000 inhabitants)
 - Cellular telephones in use (per 1000 inhabitants)
 - Membership in INTELNET/ITU/WIPO?
 - Information technology expenditure (as a % of GDP)
 - Information technology expenditure (\$US per capita)
- INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION**
 - Books published annually (per 1000 inhabitants)
 - Press freedom
 - Number of independent daily newspapers published
 - Number of independent radio stations
 - Number of independent television stations
 - Cable television available?
 - Satellite television coverage?
 - Access to Internet, etc.?
 - Number of Internet service providers

... results in revealing ranking of emerging economies

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- Gross national product (\$US per capita)
- Unemployment rate (%)
- Energy consumption (per capita)
- Private automobiles/trucks in use (per 1000 inhabitants)
- External social programs aid received (\$US per capita)
- UN Human Development Index ranking
- SOCIAL STABILITY & HUMAN RIGHTS**
 - Absence of overt territorial disputes?
 - Refugees (as a % of population)
 - Number of foreign tourist arrivals (in thousands)
 - Workers' rights protected?
 - Degree of political rights
 - Degree of civil liberties
- HEALTH**
 - Birth rate (out of 1000)
 - Death rate (out of 1000)
 - Life expectancy
 - National healthcare program in operation?
 - Government expenditure on health (% of GDP)
 - Population per physician
 - Population per hospital bed
 - National social security program in operation?
 - Daily calorie supply (per capita)
- ENVIRONMENT**
 - Protected land (% of total land area)
 - Signatory to CITES/ITTA/Montreal Protocol/UNCLOS?
 - Air pollution index (carbon dioxide emissions in metric tons per capita)
 - Percentage of population with access to clean water

By Crocker Snow, Jr

THE FIGURES, TABLES and icons that appear on this page represent something new. It is a statistical attempt to measure the relative health, wealth and well-being of a number of developing countries—“emerging markets” in the vernacular of Western money managers. The indexing combines economic, social environment and information exchange terms. This represents our conviction that the prognosis for one developing country, measured against another, can best be realized by merging standard economic and financial factors with two other kinds of data: social indicators of the quality of life and gauges of a people's ability to readily absorb, adapt and exchange information. The development of this index has taken a year. It was spawned at a gathering of leaders of Western private financial firms, ranking officials in the United Nations system and policy makers from developing countries that took place in Copenhagen in March 1995 coincident with the 50th anniversary of the UN. The World Times International Inquiry, “Money Matters: Financing Social Development in the 21st Century,” took place shortly after the collapse of the Mexican peso. Many conference

participants cited the political shift from the Salinas to the Zedillo government coupled with social unrest due to the Zapatista rebellion in the country's poor southern state of Chiapas as critical and unaccounted for factors. The losses suffered by the people of Mexico and by portfolio managers from mutual fund companies invested there weighed heavily on prospects for continued Western investment in developing countries. The Inquiry participants agreed that there is an abundance of information and data about emerging economies but a lack of sound perspective. Mexico's roller coaster ride in financial markets was a powerful illustration. As convener of the Inquiry that focused on the tension between the imperatives of private finance and the appetites of developing countries, World Times was encouraged to try to do something about this. Headquartered as we are in Boston, which currently has more money under management than any other city in the world, and as publisher of *The WorldPaper*, which is heavily circulated in the developing countries of Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Central Europe, we welcomed the challenge. The index introduced here represents our best effort. It is based on the

premise that the three types of indicators we highlight are equally important in spotlighting a nation's strengths and weaknesses. We have learned, in the course of several intensive months of preparation, that the notion of measuring three such diverse sets of indicators is unusual if not unprecedented. The decision to balance them evenly is open to challenge. Indeed, the related essays are written by advocates of each apex of the triangle. We have measured 53 developing countries in this initial index, those countries that currently attract attention from Western money managers and capital. For reasons of statistical balance and elegance, we have identified 25 items to measure in each of the three categories. Included are standard items like purchasing price parity (economic), life expectancy (social) and literacy rates (information). Some more contemporary measurements have been sprinkled in such as tax revenues as a percent of GNP (economic), population per physician (social) and PCs per thousand (information). And we have spiced the index up with some exotic factors like male/female wage parity (economic), refugees as a percent of population (social) and Internet service providers (information). Sourcing these measurements has

proven a challenge. We turned to three favored institutions for help: the IFC, the private-sector wing of the World Bank, for the primary economic figures; the United Nations Development Program that prepares the annual Human Development Index (HDI) for essential social indicators; and the International Data Corporation, a private Massachusetts-based information technology research company for some core information indicators. For less conventional data, we tapped sources ranging from the World Wildlife Fund to Refugees International, from the Committee on Press Freedom to The Institute of International Education. But sourcing was only half the battle. Some core statistics like GDP are readily available, but dated. In other cases, official and unofficial figures conflict. ▶ REVEALING RANKING PAGE 2

THE WORLD PAPER

The WorldPaper appears as a special section in national newspapers and magazines around the world.

Published by World Times, Inc. 230 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10020-1294. Telephone: (212) 439-5400. E-mail: WorldPaper@worldtimes.com. Fax: (212) 439-5405. Volume 2004, Number 3. © World Times, Inc.

Even in Iceland

Information is king

By David Hill

TURN THE ECONOMISTS loose, and watch the statistics pile up. Round up some sociologists to study all those foreign cultures. Now open your bottom drawer, dump in all that verbiage on social trends and send the sociologists off to study the indigenous tribes of Atlantis.

The economic data will be harder to handle. You need several file cabinets for all that material. The economists can be sent off to sharpen their pencils, noses and economic forecasting models.

The time has come to get some data that will really predict the likelihood of success for a newly developing market.

With the arrival of the information society, the best indicator to the future success of any national market will be the ability to access and use information. Go forth and gather data on the percentage of offices and homes that have personal computers. This will tell you how efficient business will be and whether the next generation will have the intellectual tools to continue the growth.

Check the volume of books, magazines and newspapers published; the number of libraries; the independence of the media; the number of television and radio stations. This will tell you the flow of information to the society, informing them of new ideas, stimulating creativity and synthesizing disparate developments into new products and ideas.

Explore the ownership of modems, ability to access the Internet, availability of cellular phones and penetration of CD-ROM drives. These will tell you the ability of the society to communicate, both with itself and with others anywhere on the planet.

This is not to say economic and so-

cial statistics are worthless.

Social indicators tell from where a society has come. Immigration statistics, the status of health care, pollution controls and the number of political parties tell you something of the values that shaped the current society. Economic indicators tell where a society is today. GNP, foreign and domestic debt, lending rates, foreign reserves and government revenue per capita are a snapshot of current conditions. They are a statement of national assets but not of informational preparedness.

It is the information indicators that explain the rate at which a society is likely to progress in the future. A work force with good health care, a healthy environment and broad political choices will be of little use if it cannot gather information, process it and communicate effectively. Economic statistics in themselves do not move a country forward. They must be processed for combined meaning that indicates a course of action.

A recent study published by the Fraser Institute and 10 other economic institutes around the world demonstrates with stunning effectiveness the link between economic freedom and national prosperity. Those countries that consistently protect the money supply, fight inflation, resist price controls, employ rational tax policies and allow the free exchange of goods and money are the nations that prosper over long periods.

Essential to economic freedom in the next 20 years will be free access to information and the ability to process it. Public policy aimed at controlling information flow for short-term political reasons will inevitably harm that na-

tion's progress. The warnings of problems ahead can come in many forms.

Egypt finished 79th of the 102 countries in a recent study and has most of the woes that afflict developing countries. Egyptian government officials profess to believe in the importance of information technology in education and industry. Yet Cairo is one of the few major cities of the world where one cannot use a cellular phone.

The reason: cellular communications are too difficult to control. They fear the Islamic militants who have assassinated the odd tourist here and there over recent years will use cellular phones to good advantage in their terror campaigns against the government.

Such policy is a warning sign about Egypt's future. The economic stimulus of easy, efficient communications in Egypt would in the long term create opportunities that would give the youth of the country something more constructive to do than turn to terrorism. For the moment, Egypt has turned from this path.

The nation that embraces information technology, on the other hand, is in a position to compete in the global arena with an effectiveness out of proportion with other economic and social indicators.

Iceland has a population of just 260,000 people. It is isolated. The climate is challenging. The language, protected with a ferocity that puts France to shame, is difficult. Yet the information technology indicators predict national growth and success out of proportion with national size and handicaps.

Icelanders are educated. The literacy rate is 100 percent. Most speak two or three languages. They are one of the leading per capita producers of books and magazines. The Internet is widely

INFORMATION EXCHANGE		
RANK		COUNTRY
1		Korea
2		Israel
3		Taiwan
4		Czech Republic
5		Chile
6		Argentina
7		Uruguay
8		Mexico
9		Poland
10		Russia
11		Brazil
12		Venezuela
13		Panama
14		Malaysia
15		Costa Rica
16		South Africa
17		Ukraine
18		Colombia
19		Romania
20		Philippines
21		Peru
22		Turkey
23		Thailand
24		Ecuador
25		China
26		Indonesia
27.5		Egypt
27.5		Jordan
29		India
30		Cuba
31		Pakistan
32		Morocco
33		Vietnam

used, and there is a movement afoot to connect every building in the country to fiber optic cable in the next couple of years.

Iceland finished 43rd on the economic freedom list, well behind Bolivia, Mauritius, Fiji and Trinidad. Given the information technology indicators, bet on Iceland over the next 20 years. ☐

DAVID HILL IS THE PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL DATA GROUP (IDG) PUBLISHING.

REVEALING RANKING

Continued from page 1

and a choice must be made about which is most accurate. And some countries, Russia and Cuba to name just two, offer lots of social indicators but a scarcity of reliable economic ones.

Judging some indicators in terms of being positive or negative was another hurdle. Consider carbon monoxide levels. Of course high levels within a country indicate industrialization and large numbers of private autos. But it also spells pollution, dirty air, poisoned water and a diminished quality of life. We opted for measuring high carbon dioxide as a negative factor in the social environment matrix, not a positive one in the economic matrix. Urbanization presented another problem. Does the rapid growth of big cities in a developing country speak more positively in terms of economic development or negatively in terms of a crowded and polluted social environment? We punted on this one, eliminating it altogether.

One participant described the challenge as "striving for a total objectivity it cannot attain and against a total subjectivity it cannot eradicate, a never-ending battle between objective presentation of data on the one hand, and subjective selection of it on the other."

Some measurements were readily available and obviously important such as the consumer price index. But should this economic measure be part of the economic 25 or, because it reflects consumer spending, included in the social environment listing? We opt-

ed for the former.

Some figures proved elusive. World Travel and Tourist Council provided a profusion of information on travel habits around the world, but no data on how many people have passports in each country. Nor did any else. We struggled to come up with reliable figures on relative levels of crime and corruption, but failed. We strove to find data on the library lending rate different countries and on the number of citizens speaking English as a second language, each representing a common way of getting at the information absorption capacity of a society in the information age.

On balance and with humility, we have done our best. We have eliminated those measurements that were impossible to come by and extrapolated some others that didn't have themselves to pure numerical analysis. Absolute figures have been turned

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Cinema

"TO WONG FOO, THANKS FOR EVERYTHING! JULIE NEWMAR" (MCA/Universal,): Something of an Americanized version of "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert," this comedy teams Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes and John Leguizamo as cross-dressers who head for Hollywood together to seek fame and fortune. They're dejected along the way in a town that's downright baffled by them... and yes, title figure Newmar actually does appear. ** (PG-13: AS, P)

"THE AFFAIR" (HBO,): Harry Belafonte served as the executive producer of this fact-inspired, made-for-cable drama, starring Courtney B. Vance ("The Tuskegee Army") as a soldier stationed in England during World War II. While there, his interracial romance with a British wife (Kerry Fox, of "Shallow Grave") threatens to erupt into a major scandal; Bill Nunn and Ned Beatty also appear. *** (R: AS, P, V)

HELD OVER: "UNDER SIEGE 2: DARK TERRITORY" (Warner,): Steven Seagal reprises his role as the combat-expert cook in this adventure sequel, placing the character and his niece (Katherine Heigl) aboard a train taken over by a vicious villain (Eric Bogosian) and his minions. The bad guys turn the locomotive into a moving command post in a bid to control a satellite for evil purposes; Morris Chestnut also is featured. *** (R: AS, P, V)

"TRUMAN" (HBO,): Recent Golden Globe-winner Gary Sinise stars as the 33rd President of the United States in this biography — based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book by David McCullough, and initially shown on HBO — that traces the roles that the politician played in many critical decisions that still impact on the world today. Diana Scarwid plays Bess Truman; Tony Goldwyn and Colin Firth also appear. *** (R: AS, P, V)

"THE BIG GREEN" (Disney,): Sort of a "Mighty Ducks" of soccer, this comedy casts Steve Guttenberg ("Three Men and a Cradle") in what was his first screen role in a while — as the coach of another team of youthful underdogs. They go through the motions of shaping themselves into a winning squad; they're put to the ultimate test in a big game, which should get this video played often by young fans. ** (PG: P)

COMING SOON: "POCAHONTAS" (Disney, Feb. 28): The latest animated feature from the Disney studio features Alan Menken-composed songs and Mel Gibson's voice. (G)

"FAIR GAME" (Warner, Mar. 5): Supermodel Cindy Crawford plays an attorney pursued by foreign enemies and protected by police detective William Baldwin. (R)

"A WALK IN THE CLOUDS" (Fox, Mar. 5): Keanu Reeves plays a war veteran who poses as the husband of a pregnant, unwed woman (Aitana Sanchez-Gijon). (PG)

FAMILY-VIEWING GUIDE KEY: AS, adult situations; N, nudity; P, profanity; V, violence; GV, particularly graphic violence.

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ENGLISH PROGRAM

SATURDAY

2:00—Moomins
2:30—Wish Kid
3:00—Big Brother Jake
3:25—Blue Heelers
4:00—Voyagers
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Major Dad
8:00—Discover the Continent
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:10—A Fine Romance
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Feature Film: A Million to Juan, starring: Paul Rodriguez & Ruben Blades
11:50—Mancuso FBI

SUNDAY

2:00—The Flintstones
2:30—Disney's Aladdin
3:00—Mac And Mutley
3:25—The Peak Practice
4:10—Okavango
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Basketball P.D.
8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:15—Women of the World
9:30—Murphy Brown
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Counterstrike
11:15—The American Chart Show
12:00—Forever Green

MONDAY

2:00—Bonkers
2:30—Richie Rich
3:00—Bush School
3:15—Playabout
4:00—Animals of the Medi-

TERRANEAN

5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—The Nanny
8:00—Rhythms that Speak
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:10—Temples of the Gods
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—P.S. I Luv You
11:10—Taurus Rising
12:00—Ellen

TUESDAY

2:00—Captain Planet
2:30—Jonny Quest
2:50—Iris: The Happy Professor
3:00—The Bob Morrison Show
3:40—Scientific Eye
4:10—Tales of the Gold Monkey
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Thunder Alley
8:00—Clive Anderson
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:10—Harry
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Feature Film: Breach of Contract, starring: Michael Margotta & Cindy Pickett
12:00—McMillan & Wife

WEDNESDAY

2:00—The Flintstones
2:30—Speed Racer
3:00—Bill Nye the Science Guy
3:15—Dinosaurs
3:45—The Secret World of Alex Mac
4:00—Tales of the Gold Monkey
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Evening Shade



Disney's Aladdin, Sunday at 2:30

8:00—The Nature of Things
8:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
9:10—Under the Sun
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Airwolf
11:20—The Silk Road
12:30—Second Thoughts

THURSDAY

1:00—Aladdin
1:30—Treasure Island
2:00—My Secret Identity
2:20—NBA
3:15—The New Leave it to Beaver
3:40—Pirates
4:30—Gillette World Sport
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Carol And Company
8:00—Magazine 01
8:15—The Album Show
9:10—Miami Vice
10:00—News At Ten
10:25—Feature Film: Vital Signs, starring: Edward Asner

FRIDAY

1:00—The Pebbles and the Bamm Bamm Show
1:30—Iris: The Happy Professor
1:45—See How They Grow
1:55—Bush School
2:10—Spider Man
3:30—The Private Life of Plants
4:15—Wonder Why
4:35—Give Us a Clue
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Short Story Cinema
8:00—Sea Quest
8:45—America's Funniest People
9:15—Wildcats
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Second Chances
11:30—Classic Movie: The Ugly American, starring: Marlon Brando & Eiji Okada

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

5:00—Dessins animés
Ordy
Cupido
5:30—Série
Extrême limite
«Dernière seconde»
6:00—Série
Château Vallon
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Faut pas rêver
«Papouasie»

DIMANCHE

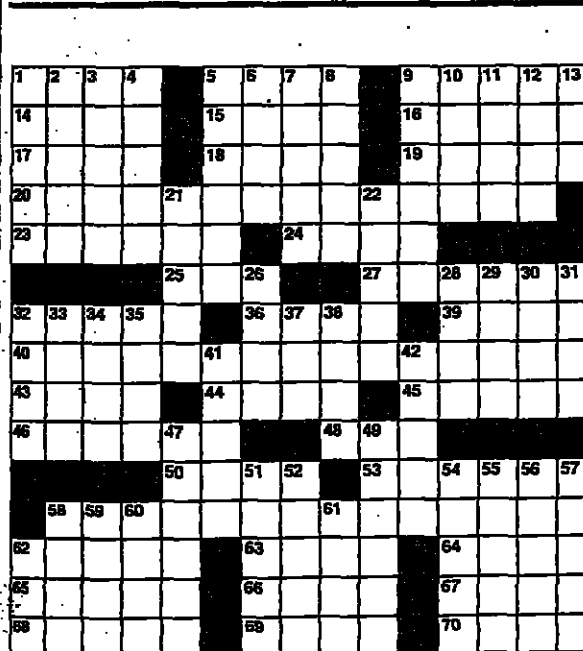
5:00—Dessins animés
Ordy
Cupido
5:30—Série
Extrême limite
«Fils indigne»
6:00—Magazine
Envoyé spécial
«La ballade des camelots»
«Le prince de l'opium»
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Sports et musique

LUNDI

5:00—Dessins animés
Ordy
Cupido
5:20—Série
Extrême limite
«La voie du septième ciel»
6:00—Magazine
Esm6
6:20—Divertissement
L'école des fans
«Pierre Perret»
7:00—Le journal

Programs are subject to change by JTV

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Violent blow
5 — mutual
9 Certain fly
14 Malaysian
15 Yule man
16 "— and his money"
17 Roman
18 Duskloths
19 Of ships
20 Select group
21 Line of a different color
24 River duck
25 Range of vision
27 Farina or oatmeal
32 "— porridge hor"
36 Roman road
38 Facility
40 Aristocratic roster
43 Mythological

DOWN
1 Certain
2 Should
3 Concerned one
4 Cutlery item
5 False hair
6 Winglike
7 Suitable
8 Point of dispute
9 Primitive light
10 At a distance
11 Strong affection
12 Burden
13 "Winner take all"
21 Type of bucket
22 Indecent shell lining
26 Pleasural
28 Old-time autos
29 Devours
30 Tennis star
31 Meadows, to poets
32 Buddies
33 Literary pseudonym
34 "— For All Seasons"
35 Semi-precious stone
37 Ankle
38 Ms. Milly
41 Roman courtyards
42 French chef's word
47 Prepared for publication
49 Blow taps
51 Church dignitary
52 Fountain in Italy
54 Theater worker
55 Cubic meter
56 Spectral
57 Deep fear
58 Farm storage area
59 Roman poet
60 Relinquish
61 College in N.C.
62 "Johnny —"

— THIS WEEK'S — HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun and moon are both in Pisces, increasing personal intuition and sensitivity. Hunches might even work.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Take care of personal matters to avoid embarrassment. Somebody could make a big fuss if you don't. Romance should go very well.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Your social calendar may be packed. Give charitable efforts top priority. Expect startling developments. Don't let a friend's panic rub off on you.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Figure out what the supervisor wants for the best marks. Save time for friends, and for romance. Do what you promised.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Watch out for a gorgeous, spiritually advanced foreigner. That one could teach you something important.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You might qualify for a benefit you don't even know about. Check it out. Travel connected with a sports activity could lead to romance.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll lose unless you join forces with an imaginative partner. You provide the common sense. Go in with your best friend on a big purchase.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A loud and obnoxious person may annoy you. There may be more to this one than you think. Don't cut off communication.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your sweetheart and/or your children will be very active. You may have to play more than usual! The pressure's alleviated by a frisky co-worker.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A friend may need your help. Advise complete honesty, and completion. Your own love life dominates every spare moment. Be prepared.

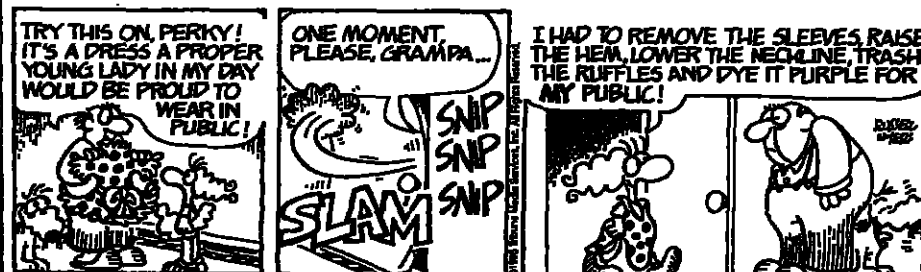
Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You can learn more now than you have all year. Push yourself and excel on a tough assignment.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You could come into a lot of money. Don't spend it all in one place! Take on your noblest adversary. You're brilliant.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). You're awesome. Overcome one of your oldest fears, through action. You'll be strongly tempted to buy presents for somebody you like.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Stand on your experience and take a leap of faith this year! You're strong, and lucky! Love could get

PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



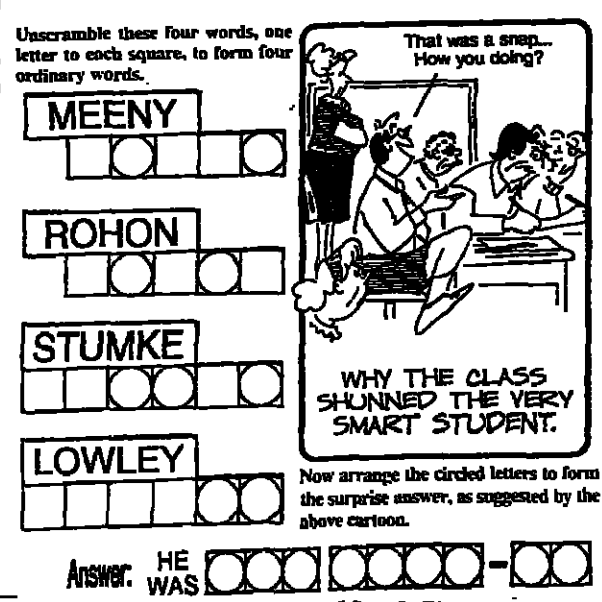
ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble



SLAPSTIX
Clean your finger before you point at my spots!

Words of Wisdom

Science is simply the art of discovery.

Virtue is usually rooted in the practice of good habits.

Those who are unkind to others often don't realize they are also being unkind to themselves.

Those loudest in voice are often the feeblest of foot.

The future can be seized with anxiety or with faith.

No matter what the political pundits say, the voters always have the privilege of having the final word.

Those who like to snipe at people behind their backs are afraid of confrontation. Confronting them will make them stop.

Bridge

EACH TRICK IN ITS TIME

By Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

AKJ5

K5

AK976

1076

WEST

AQ1094

83

QJ82

Q82

SOUTH

A86

10762

3

AKJ94

EAST

732

AQJ94

1054

53

The bidding:

North East South West

10 Pass 24 Pass

20 Pass 2NT Pass

3NT Pass Pass

Opening lead: Eight of ♠

This deal is from a team match. The contract and lead were identical at the two tables. One declarer made the contract. The other was defeated, and there was nothing that declarer could do to alter the outcome.

South had a rebid problem. To introduce hearts at the two-level would have overstated the quality of South's second suit and complicated an auction that was already on thin ice because of the potential misfit. Two no trump was a sensible compromise, and North's raise to game was clear cut.

Understandably reluctant to lead away from a queen, West struck a gigantic blow for the defenders by selecting the eight of hearts for the opening salvo. Declarer played low from dummy, East won with the jack, cashed the ace and continued with the queen of hearts. South's ten was a stopper and, even though the club finesse failed, declarer coasted home with nine tricks.

At the other table East took some time before playing to the first trick. It was most unlikely that South had bid no trump without a reasonable semblance of a heart stopper. Since it seemed that the defenders were going to need four heart tricks to defeat the contract, East elected to allow for the possibility that West's lead was the top of a doubleton, and simply signalled encouragement by playing the nine.

Even with the heart trick in the bag, declarer had only seven fast tricks — eight if the spade finesse succeeded. The only chance to get home was to hope that the club finesse was right so, after cashing the king of clubs, declarer crossed to dummy with a high diamond and ran the club ten. West won and reverted to hearts — down one.

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The Star

Phone: 652380

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Les Arabes veulent la levée du blocus palestinien

«Les Palestiniens prennent des mesures claires pour résister à la violence et l'Égypte demande la levée du blocus de la Cisjordanie et Gaza car sa poursuite provoque la déception qui à son tour provoque la violence», a déclaré le chef de la diplomatie égyptienne Amr Moussa au nom des pays arabes quelques heures avant l'ouverture du «sommet des bâtisseurs de paix» qui s'est tenu hier en Égypte, à Charm el-Cheikh. Le président égyptien Hosni Moubarak (notre photo) avait lui-même déjà mis en garde mardi contre «une anarchie chez les Palestiniens» si Israël continuait à adopter des mesures de sécurité «exagérées». Depuis quelques jours, de nombreux hommes d'affaires palestiniens tirent la sonnette d'alarme en avertissant que l'économie palestinienne est en train de s'effondrer, évaluant à 65% la baisse d'activité enregistrée. Pour eux, l'économie locale ne survivrait pas à deux semaines de blocus supplémentaires.



Jordanie

Les droits de l'Homme vont de travers

Dans son rapport annuel, l'Organisation arabe des droits de l'Homme constate une dégradation de la situation dans le royaume. Les violations se sont multipliées en 1995, et, selon le rapport, le gouvernement n'a pas clairement manifesté sa volonté de mettre fin à ces abus.

Dans son rapport

annuel, l'Organisation arabe des droits de l'Homme (OADH), une organisation non-gouvernementale observant le respect des droits de l'Homme, a constaté une augmentation des violations des droits de l'Homme en Jordanie en 1995. Elle enregistre un déclin notable du respect «des droits fondamentaux et démocratiques du peuple jordanien», non seulement à travers différents cas particuliers, mais aussi dans la législation adoptée. L'année 1995 a vu l'augmentation de la torture et de l'utilisation d'armes à feu par les autorités contre des civils, entraînant la mort de deux personnes. Le traité de paix avec Israël a conduit au renforcement de l'opposition politique au gouvernement jordanien. Mais ce

lui-ci a refusé de dialoguer. Il a même procédé à des arrestations et des interrogatoires des chefs de l'opposition accusés de résistance à la normalisation avec Israël.

En 1995, le nombre de plaintes déposées par des citoyens auprès de l'OADH a augmenté. Deux types d'abus des droits de l'Homme commis par le gouvernement ont été constatés: l'utilisation excessive de la force par les autorités, et l'adoption de certaines mesures pour couvrir les abus commis par le pouvoir exécutif.

L'organisation a essayé d'apporter une réponse aux plaintes des citoyens en s'adressant au gouvernement, mais ce dernier a refusé de lui répondre dans la plupart des cas.

L'OADH, qui a obtenu moins de 12% de réponses, interprète ce silence gouverne-

mental comme «un manque de respect pour les droits de l'Homme» qui traduit son manque de volonté «de mettre fin aux abus».

Les plaintes découlant d'infractions aux droits fondamentaux commises par les autorités concernent notamment la confiscation de passeports, ou le refus d'entrée sur le territoire à des enfants nés de mères jordanaises.

Un rapport incomplet

«C'est la première fois que ce rapport est publié intégralement dans les journaux», commente Souleiman Sweiss, membre de l'OADH. «C'est déjà une bonne chose. Mais ce rapport aurait dû prendre en compte les affaires révélées par les journaux d'opposition. Il aurait alors été trois fois plus gros.»

Pour Souleiman Sweiss, ce

rapport ne s'intéresse pas assez aux problèmes sociaux, économiques ou culturels. «Le rapport ne prend pas en compte la société civile où existent des violations dues à des individus comme les meurtres d'enfants, les femmes battues ou les crimes d'honneur. Un homme qui venge l'honneur de sa famille en tuant sa sœur ne sera condamné qu'à un an et demi de prison.»

De plus, ce rapport omet un certain aspect des choses. «Pour être honnête et convaincant, il aurait aussi dû évoquer les progrès en matière de droits de l'Homme en Jordanie, comme par exemple les élections municipales d'Amman en mai 1995 qui ont permis aux habitants de participer à la gestion de leur ville. Il n'y a aucune preuve apportée aux fraudes électorales dénoncées, ce qui laisse penser qu'il y a peut-être un objectif politique caché.»

Si les signes récents de progrès démocratiques tels que la création de comités de contrôle et de surveillance dans les ministères ou la volonté de mettre fin aux conflits avec les syndicats, incitent Souleiman Sweiss à être plutôt optimiste, il reste tout de même prudent vis-à-vis des promesses du nouveau gouvernement.

Il souhaite que de nouveaux organismes de contrôle voient le jour dans le pays. «Nous espérons la création d'une commission nationale chargée du respect des droits de l'Homme, comme il en existe dans 60 pays, y compris ceux du Maghreb, ainsi que l'application des décisions de la commission des droits de l'Homme et de l'Assemblée générale des Nations-Unies.»

Mona Kaddoumi



Amman

L'Unesco réunit les ONG

La première conférence rassemblant les Organisations non-gouvernementales des pays arabes s'est tenue à Amman. L'occasion pour l'Unesco de définir sa politique de coopération.

A l'initiative de l'Unesco, la première conférence régionale des Organisations non-gouvernementales (ONG) des pays arabes a été organisée à Amman cette semaine.

Pendant cinq jours, les soixante-dix participants invités, qui venaient du monde entier, ont traité des caractéristiques des ONG internationales dans les pays arabes et de leur coordination avec les unités de terrain de l'Unesco.

«L'Unesco, qui est représentée par ses institutions partout dans le monde, s'est rendu compte de la nécessité de coordonner l'action des ONG avec les différents acteurs de la société civile», explique Rao Chelikani, président du comité des ONG auprès de l'Unesco.

Il y a en Jordanie sept cents associations sociales travaillant avec le comité des ONG. «Notre objectif est d'améliorer la qualité de vie en Jordanie», explique Rebbi Katoun, représentant du comité. «Il est primordial d'établir des ponts entre les organisations internationales pour aider les projets de développement local.»

Pour ceux qui investissent leur temps dans les ONG, cette coopération avec l'Unesco doit d'abord être financière.

C'est le cas par exemple de Wala Sourour, qui travaille dans «l'oasis de paix», un village situé sur les anciennes terres palestiniennes conquises en 1948 dans lequel cohabitent Palestiniens et Israéliens. Elle espère que par le biais de cette conférence, de nombreux projets seront soutenus par l'Unesco.

De son côté, l'Unesco a tenu à clarifier son rôle. «Un est une organisation intellectuelle rassemblant des spécialistes qui offrent leur savoir-faire et non pas une agence financière qui distribue de l'argent», explique Ndaye Fall du Bureau principal de l'Unesco à Paris.

«Nous pourrions nous organiser ce genre de conférences. Pour informer les organisations internationales dans les pays en développement du rôle de l'Unesco et des possibilités de coopération que nous pourrions leur offrir.»

Un rôle de superviseur Le principal objectif de l'Unesco dans le cadre de la coordination avec les ONG est de superviser leur fonctionnement. «Dans les pays arabes, le concept de services sociaux n'est pas assez vieux. Nous ne pou-

vons pas le comparer avec celui des pays développés», ajoute Ndaye Fall. Néanmoins, la démocratie dont jouit la Jordanie a permis la création de plusieurs ONG sans aucune interférence du gouvernement.

Elle a été choisie parmi tous les pays arabes pour accueillir cette première conférence car elle a l'image d'un pays neutre politiquement», explique Marwan El Rabadi, responsable du comité national de l'Unesco au ministère de l'Éducation. Une position qui permet l'accueil de toutes les nationalités arabes sans restriction.

Le rôle important de la Jordanie dans le processus de paix au Moyen-Orient a naturellement aussi guidé ce choix. Car comme l'explique Dr Adnan Badran, vice-président de l'Unesco à Paris, «le siècle à venir nous apporte la fin des guerres et le début d'une ère de paix. Les armements seront réduits et les dépenses se concentreront beaucoup plus sur la formation des êtres humains afin de leur fournir une meilleure éducation. C'est ce message de paix qui doit être amplifié sur le terrain par les ONG et l'Unesco.»

Oroub el Abed

Différents types de violations

L'OADH a repertorié l'ensemble des violations enregistrées durant toute l'année 1995. Voici quelques extraits de ce rapport:

Droit constitutionnel:

Le rapport attire l'attention sur l'absence d'une cour constitutionnelle indépendante chargée de vérifier les lois, rôle tenu jusqu'à présent par le Conseil supérieur pour l'interprétation de la constitution.

Droit à la vie:

Le gouvernement n'a jamais formé de commission d'enquête au sujet de la mort de plusieurs civils tués lors d'incidents avec la police.

Droit à la justice:

Le syndicaliste Leith Chbeilat a été envoyé devant une cour de sûreté au lieu d'un tribunal civil. Son avocat n'a pas pu assister au début du procès. Son comité de soutien n'a pas pu le rencontrer seul, et sa demande de mise en liberté sous caution a été rejetée, alors qu'elle aurait pu, selon la loi, être acceptée. L'organisation a noté l'augmentation de procès politiques, certains ayant conduit à des peines d'emprisonnement.

Traitement des prisonniers:

Lors d'une visite à la prison de Swaqa, l'organisation a constaté que les prisonniers restaient étonnamment silencieux. L'un d'entre eux a révélé qu'ils avaient été menacés de placement en quartier d'isolement s'ils parlaient.

Liberté d'expression et opinion:

Pour l'OADH, ces libertés ont connu un certain recul en 1995. Le contrôle du gouvernement s'est accru, des rédacteurs en chef ayant été placés en détention pour avoir publié des informations allant contre «la loi sur les publications».

Gaza

Le bouclage gagne un cran

A nouveau bouclée, la bande de Gaza souffre économiquement. Certains produits commencent déjà à manquer dans les commerces, et des milliers de travailleurs se retrouvent au chômage.

Le prix des fleurs

N'a jamais été aussi bas à Gaza. Dans certains magasins de fruits et légumes, des fleurs sont même offertes aux clients. Un excès de générosité dû à l'interdiction notifiée aux Palestiniens d'exporter leurs fleurs et leurs fraises, de bonne qualité, vers l'Europe, et en particulier vers les Pays-bas.

Cette interdiction fait partie de toute une série de mesures prises par les autorités israéliennes faisant en sorte que Gaza et la Cisjordanie fassent l'objet d'un véritable blocus depuis le 25 février, suite aux attentats perpétrés à Jérusalem et Tel-Aviv.

Les 15 000 travailleurs palestiniens ne se rendent plus en Israël. Le passage de Karmy, à l'Ouest de Gaza, lieu d'échange entre les produits israéliens et palestiniens, est fermé pour la première fois. Les journaux arrivent partiellement et irrégulièrement. Plusieurs malades sont morts à cause du temps perdu lors des contrôles aux barrières militaires israéliennes. Les médicaments manquent de plus en plus et les files d'attente augmentent devant les boulangeries. Plus de 5 000 pêcheurs sont eux aussi obligés d'interrompre leur travail. Israël ayant instauré un blocus naval.

La liste des conséquences économiques néfastes de ce bouclage de la bande de Gaza est longue. Quant à la Cisjordanie, le schéma de l'occupation à peine allégée est vite revenu, avec autant plus de féroce, dans les zones A (sous contrôle



Israélien total) et B (contrôle commun israélo-palestinien). Tout un peuple est puni pour les crimes d'un autre groupe d'individus de plus en plus isolés.

Les nombreuses arrestations de la police israélienne parmi les cadres et les dirigeants du Hamas et les différentes interdictions des structures paramilitaires n'ont pas suffi, jusqu'à présent, à alléger ces mesures

de rétorsion. Le bouclage appliqué aujourd'hui est nouveau. Pas dans sa durée, mais dans sa forme accentuée. Les territoires palestiniens ont déjà été fermés 254 jours, chaque journée coûtant six millions de dollars. Il est donc urgent de trouver une solution de compromis.

Il faut attaquer directement aux racines du problème et commencer immédiatement les

négociations sur le statut définitif des territoires, comme l'indique le communiqué du comité exécutif de l'OLP, réuni pour la première fois cette semaine à Gaza, et qui a décidé de convoquer le conseil national dans deux mois en Palestine.

A Gaza, Hassan Halawi

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

ELISA

Une adolescente, Vanessa Paradis, est à la recherche de son père. Gérard Depardieu, responsable de la tragédie qui a coûté la vie à sa mère.

Un film de Jean Becker (1994).

Cinéma Philadelphia. Version française sous-titrée en arabe et en anglais. Séances à 12h30, 15h30, 18h15, 20h30, 22h30.



Suite du cycle François Truffaut (8 films et 2 vidéos) au Centre culturel français (CCF) et à la fondation Shoman:

«La femme d'à côté» le 18/03 à 20h00 au CCF.

«Julie et Jim» le 19/03 à 18h30 à la fondation Shoman.

Vidéo

«La sirène du Mississippi» le 20/03 à 18h00 au CCF.

Peinture

Jusqu'au 02/04, exposition au CCF des œuvres de Nawal Abdullah, artiste appartenant au mouvement de l'abstraction lyrique.

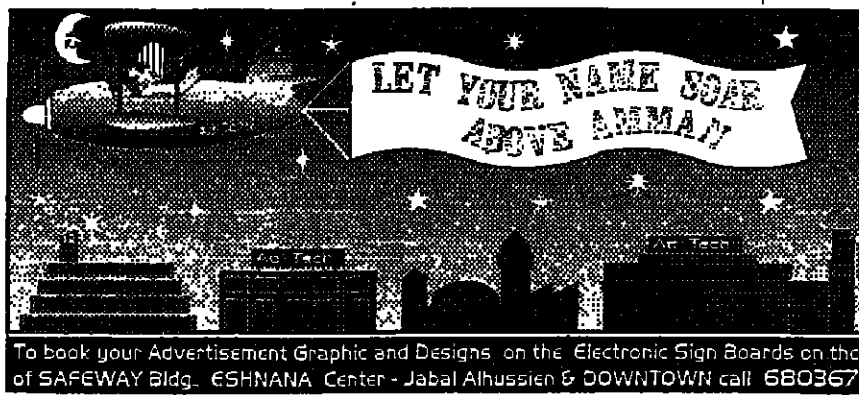
Suhail Al Sweiss

Activities

Royal Cultural Centre	6610267	Concord Cinema	677420
American Centre Library	820101	Plaza Cinema	699238
British Council	6361478	Philadelphia Cinema	634144
French Cultural Centre	637009		
Goethe Institute	641993		
Cervantes Institute (Spanish)	610858		
Turkish Cultural Centre	639777		
Haya Arts Centre	665195		
Y.W.C.A.	641793		
Y.W.M.A.	664251		
Dar Al Fann	643252		
Alia Art Gallery	639303		
Baladna Art Gallery	657132		
Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	675571		
Nabil & Hisham's Theatre	625155		

Sports Clubs

Al Hussein Sports City	667181/5
Orthodox Club	810491
Royal Automobile Club	815410
Royal Shooting Club	736572
Royal Chess Club	673713
Royal Racing Club	09-801233
Jordan Bridge Club	676990
Amman Man. Library	636111
Univ. of Jordan Library	843555
R.S.C.N.	837931/837937



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Government Depts.

The Prime Ministry	641211	Labour	698186
Amman Greater Municipality	636111	Municipalities & Environment	641393
Agriculture	686151	Parliamentary Affairs	641211
Awqaf & Islamic Affairs	666141	Planning	644466
Culture / Jabal Amman	636391	Post & Communications	624301
Education & Higher Education	669181	Public Health	665131
Energy & Mineral Resources	815615	Public Works & Housing	668481
Finance	636321	Social Development	673191
Foreign Affairs	644361	Supplies	602121
Industry & Trade	663191	Tourism & Antiquities	642311
Information	641467	Transport	641461
Interior Ministry	663111	Water & Irrigation	680100
Justice	663101	Youth / University	604701

Diplomatic Corps

Algerian	641271/2
Australian	673246/7
Austrian	644635
Bahraini	664148/9
Brazilian	642183
Belgian	675683
Bulgarian	818151
Canadian	666124
Chilean	823360
Cyprus Honorary Cons	677559
Czech	671813/666135
Danish Consulate Gen	603703
Finland Consulate	824654/824676
French	641273/4
German	689351
Greek	671331/2
Hungarian	815614
Indian Consulate	698851
Indonesian	637262
Iranian	828911
Irqi	639331
Italian	638185
Japanese	672486/7
Kuwaiti	675135/8
Libyan	693101/3
Lebanese	641381
Moroccan	641451
Netherlands	619699/7 619693
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THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

The advent of the full Internet era in most
Middle Eastern countries:

Internet invades Arabia

By Jawad Abbassi

Special To The Star
THE INTERNET is characteristically "western". Its predominant language is English and most of the computer servers that form its core as well as most of its users are in America and Western Europe.

Yet, as the ubiquitous computer has found its way before into the rest of the world, through operating systems and applications localized in different languages, it seems that the Internet is heading in the same direction.

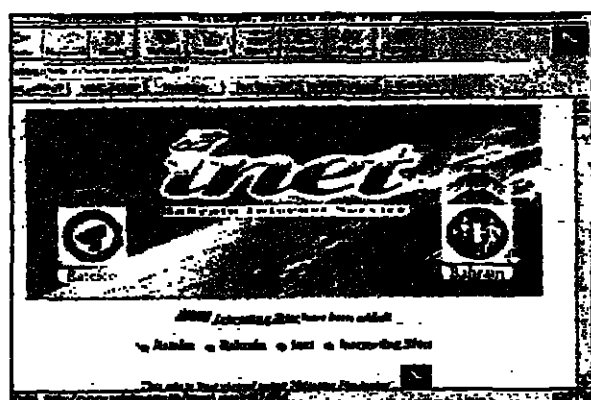
There are new releases of World Wide Web browsers, such as Internet with an Accent by Accent Inc. and Alice Browser, that can view web pages in more than 20 different languages including non Latin ones without even needing an operating system that support these languages. Also famous browsers such as Netscape, can view pages in say Arabic, provided the operating system (be it Macintosh or Windows) supports the Arabic.

This, coupled with the Internet's efficient and cheap communication uses of email and text to fax, has made the Internet a new hot issue in the Middle East. This year witnessed the inauguration of full Internet connections in Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Jordan. Before them, it was Egypt, Kuwait and Israel.

However, the Internet in the Middle East—except in Israel—is still a toddler, mainly due to low computer literacy and to high connection rates. The latter is about \$7.5 an hour in Arab countries. In Israel it costs around \$1.1 an hour. The reasons behind these

exceptionally high fees are two-fold. First, currently there is a complete monopoly in the Internet provision market in the Middle East with only one company, private or public, providing the Internet connection in any of the countries of Bahrain, Jordan, Emirates, Egypt and Kuwait. Second, for connecting to the Internet most of these countries rely on Satellite links with nodes in the US

for the cost of the connection. Despite the high premium for connecting to the Internet in the Middle East, most of these companies have seen a big demand on their services: Batelco in Bahrain (a government-owned company) estimates that it will connect more than 10 percent of Bahrain's 300,000 computer users (out of a population of 400,000) within the coming six months. Eusatel (Emirate's telecommunications corporation) has cashed in on the United Arab Emirates position as a business and trade hub and have seen its subscriptions sky rocket.



or Europe which adds a hefty premium on their running cost.

In Jordan connects its servers in Amman with a Sprint Internet Node in the US through a fiber optics cable and a satellite link. Mr. Imad Ayoub, Sprint Jordan's General Manager, says that the high cost of laying infrastructure is the main reason for its high connection rates of \$10 an hour. Sprint Jordan has had to lay its own fiber optics cable in Amman to connect to the main fiber optics cable heading to the satellite station.

The high cost for Satellites Link has also resulted in Sprint Jordan's decision to have a very limited number of local Web pages on its servers because it does not want to clog its very expensive link by requests from users outside the country who won't be paying

starting operation of its server scheduled on 27 March.

Web page authors in the Middle East have increasingly started to show their muscles on the Internet and many media companies are already offering web page authoring for Business. Mr. Khalid Tabbara of Arabia On-Line says his company's Internet services clientele base already includes four newspapers, one news agency, the huge investment group of Dallah Al Baraka and the Arab Bank.

Well, it seems that all for us Arabs—who are increasingly connecting to the Internet—there will at least be a niche corner in our mother tongue. However we would still need our English dictionaries!!!!

Jawad Abbassi can be reached at Internet address: Abbassi@NETS.Com.Jo

Computer Companies:

You are invited to share your news and views with our readers. Call us at 652280 or fax us at 652298.

Ideal Systems & Tandem hold press conference:
Jordan talks to the world in real time

By Zeid Nasser

Special To The Star
IDEAL SYSTEMS held a press conference on Wednesday 6 March, 1996, to announce its appointment as the Jordan distributor for Tandem Computers.

Making the announcement were three guests from Tandem, and Mr. Karim Kassar, general manager of Ideal Systems.

The guests were Mr. Roger Brewer, general manager of Tandem Middle East, Mr. Jes Wright, marketing manager, and Mr. Paul Davey, business development manager.

"We are delighted to be doing business in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," said Mr. Roger Brewer, introducing Tandem's achievements worldwide and explaining what Tandem systems can do in Jordan.

"We expect Tandem to connect your financial systems to the rest of the world, enabling the Jordanian economy to join the world market economy."

Tandem is a \$2.5 billion company, providing the preferred fault tolerant platform. It has been in business since 1974. Today, Tandem systems move \$6 trillion all over the world, with clients in banking, finance and telecommunications accounting for two-thirds of Tandem's business.

"Our transactions come through successfully, that is how we built our credibility," added Mr. Brewer.

Talking about the ability of Tandem systems to be incorporated into existing information system structures, that utilize solutions from other vendors, Mr. Paul Davey said that "it is important to recognize that Tandem doesn't stand alone. Buying Tandem means improv-

product, ServerNet.

He stated that "traditional bus-based computer systems will not be able to handle the coming revolution in information exchange." This is where Tandem's ServerNet steps in, explained Mr. Wright.

"ServerNet is a departure from the traditional methods of computing. It introduces a system area network in which computers talk to one another through a system similar to packet switching, with a Tandem running its operations," he said.

The speakers from Tandem concluded that Tandem systems will enable Jordan's systems to talk to the outside world, in real time.

As part of their visit to the country, the Tandem representatives met with several decision makers in major Jordanian organizations.

According to Mr. Brewer, these organizations have showed much interest in the solutions that Tandem has to offer.

Commenting on Tandem's representation in Jordan, Mr. Karim Kassar, general manager of Ideal Systems said, that "Tandem add an interesting dimension to our product offering, which allows us to cater to a new market. We see much potential for Tandem in Jordan in the areas of banking, finance and telecommunications."

Mr. Jez Wright, talked about Tandem's latest and hottest



ing the performance of your existing systems."

Tandem is a company involved in core infrastructural projects, working with governments at the highest levels of national automation solutions and looks forward to doing business in Jordan.

"We think this is crucial to increase the competitive edge of the Jordanian economy," said Mr. Davey.

Mr. Jez Wright, talked about Tandem's latest and hottest

News update

New color laser printers
from Hewlett-Packard

● Hewlett-Packard (HP) has announced that it is to introduce a new generation of color laser printers, capable of printing a color page for the same cost as a similar page on a black and white laser printer.

According to HP, the new printers are capable of producing near-photographic images. The new printers are aimed at corporate workgroup customers, who are demanding more color printing solutions.

The Color LaserJet 5 is expected to sell for \$5,995 and the Color LaserJet 5M, for Macintosh, will sell for about \$7,395. Both will be available this month on the international market.

Internet Seminar

● The Jordan Computer Society (JCS) organized a seminar on the topic of 'Internet', which was held on 10 March, at the Amman Chamber of Commerce.

The seminar was given by Mr. Sami Al Taher, of the National Information Center (NIC), and included an on-line demonstration for attendees.

The NIC has been on-line for several months, and is one of the first Jordanian organizations to gain full Internet access, utilizing it for matters of national interest and research.

Silicon Graphics
acquires Cray

● Two supercomputing giants, Silicon Graphics, Inc. and Cray Research, Inc. are merging. Silicon Graphics will acquire the outstanding shares of Cray Research.

The two companies will have combined revenue of nearly \$4 billion, representing over 40 percent of the supercomputing market.

Edward McCracken, chairman and CEO of Silicon Graphics, said, "Cray Research is a recognized leader for its technology, its people and its strong customer base. This merger combines the two most innovative companies in the supercomputing industry."

"The combination of Silicon Graphics and Cray Research will create the world's leading high-performance computing company," added McCracken.

Cray, while having problems in the last couple of years, announced a return to profitability in the last quarter of 1995.

If the deal goes as reported, the total transaction value will be over \$700 million. ■

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Please. Ease restrictions
on modems

FOLLOWING UP on last week's column on buying a modem, a friend of mine who works at a computer company in Jordan, which supplies modems, has been having a really rough time with the authorities regarding the strict restrictions on the import of modems.

Apparently, to import modems, you need a special permit from the Telecommunications Corp (TCC). Of course, the TCC gives you a permit to import a specific model, with a specified band rate. So, if you were to offer your customers a modem running at 14.4 bps, instead of the older 9.6 bps model, you would need a separate permit for that.

Moreover, you need to introduce a signed document from your foreign supplier clearly stating that the modem you want to import into the country is in line with certain restrictions.

Making things worse for computer companies, is the prospect of handling modems imported inside computer cases. Now, a computer is a computer, but with a modem it's a 'communications machine'. This means it has to be treated as such in custom fees. So, your computer with a modem suddenly turns into a piece of hardware with possibly higher custom rates. The lower customs for computers, weirdly enough, do not apply to modems.

Goodness, and they're talking about 'attracting investments' into Jordan.

Getting back to the issue of modem permits, you can't help but wonder why you need a permit in the first place? Modems do not threaten military security, which was the previous basis on which they were banned in the country. Now, this ban has been conditionally lifted, which means that it still causes problems for business people.

It's strange to think that amidst all this talk and enthusiasm about Internet and on-line services, there are still difficulties involved in the importation of modems into Jordan.

Well, it's issues like these that make you feel that the cyber age is going to take longer than we thought to arrive.

Come one, give modems to the people. Ease the restrictions.

The race for Web software

An interesting report in Newsbytes stated shed some light on the growing industry of Internet and World Wide Web software. Here are excerpts from the report:

Beyond top contenders Netscape and Microsoft, at least eight other major vendors stand a good chance for success in the Internet race, starting with Lotus/IBM and extending to Apple, said David Card, director of PC Software Research at International Data Corporation (IDC), speaking at the IDC Directions briefing. Card presented a slide of a 12-month "temperature gauge" for the World Wide Web. At the top of the thermometer was Lotus/IBM. Lotus Notes Notes, asserted Card, is the "workgroup leader," and the Lotus/IBM Internet strategy "makes sense."

Second "hottest" on the 12-month thermometer is Sun, with its Java programming language, according to Card. Now that Java has been licensed by companies like IBM, Hewlett-Packard, the language will actually "become a lot of products." Oracle is a little cooler, reported the IDC analyst. Oracle's products tend to be "hard to use, and expensive," Card maintained. Borland, a vendor that "got on the wave early," stands at number four on Card's list. "This is a company that does a really good job of segmenting the market," the IDC executive said. Adobe, the number five on the roster, was actually the first company in the industry to come out with the plug-in architecture. Card pointed out. But right now, Adobe's "natural PageMaker migration (to the Web) is under some pressure."

Novell, ranked at number six, "has the products—maybe—but so far can't sell them," according to the analyst. Corel, in acquiring WordPerfect from Novell, has obtained "the best word processor embedded in a suite." Apple's Cyberdog is "really cool," Card contended. "Cyberdog gives you a look at what the future is going to be." But, at this point, Apple must "make the next step." ■

Live on Orbit's Hollywood Channel

The 68th Academy Awards

IT'S THAT time of year again, when Hollywood's hottest actors and the cinema's best directors vie for the spotlight and the chance to win the movie world's most coveted accolade. March 25 is the 68th

Academy Awards and Oscar fever is upon us again. These will be broadcast by the Hollywood Channel live from Los Angeles and exclusive to the Arab World on Orbit.

The award ceremony will

take place on Monday, March 25 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Music Center of Los Angeles, where Oscars for outstanding film achievements in 1995 will be presented.

With no *Schindler's List* or *Forrest Gump* set to sweep the board, it's an open race, with a number of original films and talented young artists in the reckoning. Mel Gibson and Tim Robbins, both young actors turned director, are up for the Best Director Award for *Braveheart* and *Dead Man Walking*, respectively, while Sean Penn is widely tipped for Best Actor in *Dead Man Walking*. Robbins' tale of a convicted killer.

For Best Actress, Sharon Stone represents the screen sirens for her role in Martin Scorsese's *Casino*, while Hollywood's old guard is represented by Richard Dreyfuss for his role in *Mr. Holland's Opus* and Meryl Streep for *Bridges of Madison County*. Hosting the event will be Whoopi Goldberg, herself an Oscar winner for Supporting Actress in 1991 for her role in *ghost*.

In celebration of the biggest night on the movie calendar Super Movies is featuring three Oscar-winning films every day from Saturday 23 to Friday 29 March.

Oscar-winning directors, actors, actresses and even soundtracks are featured in the line-up, as well as movies that made history by sweeping the board at the Academy Awards. Oscar Week begins with a western flavour on Saturday, 23 March, with the hit musical *Oklahoma!* (2 pm GMT), followed by the winner of seven Oscars, *Dances With Wolves* (8pm GMT). The evening ends with *The Producers* at 11 pm GMT, featuring Mel Brooks' Oscar-winning screenplay.

Bette Davis plays a tempestuous Southern belle in *Jeebabe* (Sunday 24, 2pm GMT), Jes-



sica Tandy plays a cantankerous old Southern dame in *Driving Miss Daisy* (Tuesday 26, 8 pm GMT) and Gene Hackman and Willem Dafoe come up against the peculiar ways of the deep South in *Mississippi Burning* (Monday 25, 8 pm GMT). In *Silence of the Lambs* (March 27, 8 pm GMT), winner of five Oscars, Jodie Foster encounters the even stranger ways of Hannibal Lecter, Sir Anthony Hopkins' Oscar-winning portrayal of ultimate evil.

For the best in action don't miss *Platoon* (Sunday 24, 8 pm GMT), starring Tom Berenger and Charlie Sheen, or Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V* (Thursday 28, 8 pm GMT). On a lighter note, you can catch *The Graduate* (Thursday 28, 10.15 pm GMT) and *Prizzi's Honor* (Friday 29, 7.50 pm GMT), starring the irrepressible Jack Nicholson.

For romantic there is *Gone With the Wind* (Friday 29, 2pm GMT), winner of a staggering nine Oscars, as well as the Audrey Hepburn classic, *My Fair Lady*, which scored eight awards, including best picture, actor and director. ■

German spy turned writer

Entry in US denied
because of past work

By Marc Fisher

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

WASHINGTON—Markus Wolf, the legendary East German spy master now making a living selling stories of his espionage exploits, has been barred from the United States for engaging in terrorist activities.

State Department officials confirmed Monday that they denied a visa to Wolf, 71, who was scheduled to travel to New York last week to meet with his editors at Random House, which is publishing his autobiography.

Wolf, who ran the East Germany spy agency from 1958 to 1987, has also sold his life story to Paramount Pictures.

"Mr. Wolf was deputy minister of state security and was head of the foreign espionage branch," said a State Department official who insisted on anonymity. "They actively abetted and fostered state-supported terrorism. He also participated in determining the ministry's actions and goals."

"Never in all the German civil trials has there been any direct proof that I was involved in activities of terrorism," Wolf said last Monday in an interview from his home in Berlin. "Yes, I had authority over the ministry. But it's known that this department which dealt in these activities was never under my direct control."

Wolf said he did have contact "with Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization, but today, after Arafat was in front of the White House with President Clinton, it's necessary to have another view of that situation."

"It's extraordinary: Gerry Adams, Yasser Arafat, and Markus Wolf, yet," said Wolf's editor, Peter Osnos, publisher of Times Books, a division of Random House. Osnos referred to recent decisions to grant visas to Adams, the leader of Sinn Féin, the legal political wing of the outlawed Irish Republican Army, and Arafat of the PLO.

"It didn't occur to us at this stage that Markus Wolf could be regarded as a threat," Osnos said. "He stopped working for the Stasi in 1986. There is no East Germany."

The State Department official said Adams' and Arafat's visa applications were initially rejected because of their past terrorist activities, but were granted waivers because of "foreign policy considerations."

Wolf won a reprieve last year when Germany's highest court vacated his six-year sentence for treason, ruling that East Germany spies may not be prosecuted for conducting the same kind of intelligence operations against the West that their counterparts in Bonn and Washington were mounting against Communist countries.

"They're still looking for a way to charge me, now with bribery," Wolf said. "But bribery was a part of intelligence work, and the court said I cannot be prosecuted for espionage."

Wolf, who has traveled widely throughout Europe since the demise of Communist East Germany, later this month will make his first trip to Israel, which he said is "the only country that might be morally entitled" to bar him.

East Germany did not recognize the Jewish state until the end of Communist rule, and Wolf's Stasi agency was known as King's Men.

Wolf's visa application was described as a "long-awaited" move to promote "family reunification" throughout the world.

Wolf, who began planning his trip to Israel last year, is expected to arrive in the country in April. He is also expected to be in Jerusalem for the Eurovision Song Contest, which is being held in Israel.

Wolf, now a regular guest on numerous German TV talk shows, has been working on his memoirs since 1991, a process that he and his publisher described as difficult. He recently published a cookbook in Germany, but has been reluctant to divulge details of his espionage coup, even if his country no longer exists.

"It's gone through draft after draft," Osnos said. Wolf said he was "astonished" to be denied a visa when so many of his former colleagues in the Soviet KGB have been permitted to visit the United States. In addition to his publisher, Hollywood studios and several major universities have invited Wolf to make an American tour. ■



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